

LEAVES OF WORDS: THE ART OF SURIMONO AS A POETIC PRACTICE

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School

of Cornell University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

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January 2008

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LEAVES OF WORDS: THE ART OF SURIMONO AS A POETIC PRACTICE

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Cornell University, 2008

This dissertation challenges the conventional treatment of surimono as pictorial greeting/announcement cards comprising a subcategory of *ukiyo-e*, a definition based on shortsighted understanding of the genre's history that derives from distorting projections of western social forms and interests onto a Japanese case. By examining surimono's informing context and broader history, this study redefines the genre as an early modern variation on the rich traditions of ritual and seasonal poetic presentations in Japan. Such an approach allows us to understand the defining characteristics of surimono, their historical development, and social uses in symbolic exchanges in new ways, highlighting poetry as the key component that gives these works their unique form, function and semiotic significance.

My study begins with a history of reception, contrasting surimono's treatment as art historical objects in the west from the late nineteenth century with Tokugawa period definitions. I then examine the cultural background summoned up by the formats, content and methods of inscription and exchange employed by surimono's makers to give significance to their form semiotically within the context of ritual poetic exchanges. Showing how surimono emerged as a latterday, woodblock printed version of the calligraphic poetic presentation, I look in detail at early surimono from the turn of the eighteenth century, only recently treated as part of this genre, and especially the role of illustration in such works. The nature of these initial *haikai* works is then contrasted with that of the better known *ukiyo-e* illustrated *kyōka* surimono to reveal how poetry functions as a kind of genetic code, informing every

physical aspect of surimono. Distinctions between word and image in surimono blur in the mutual interactions between these signifying systems.

The result of the broad view taken in this study, which includes *haikai* and *kyōka* practices, in relation to customs of composition, inscription and presentation established in *waka* and *renga*, is a new view of surimono as an art form defined by its poetry, in which, in keeping with the classical ideal of the poetic presentation, the work itself becomes a material manifestation of poetic ideas, tones, principles and approaches to representation.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Daniel J. McKee was born in East Orange, New Jersey in 1967, the fifth in a family of eight children supported by a college professor. Having developed skills of wit and strategy to avoid being sold off for scientific experimentation, he grew to semi-maturity and took a B.A. degree in comparative literature from Rutgers College, where he became interested in Japanese literature. After university, he lived in Japan for six years, teaching and working as a translator, and having his eyes opened to an appreciation of visual art. He returned to the United States in 1997 to enter an M.F.A. program at Syracuse University, which he completed in 2000. He currently works as the Curator of the Ruth and Sherman Lee Institute for Japanese Art in California.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is unfortunate that only one name can appear as producer of this dissertation, as the form and details of its contents are the result of the influences of many, who deserve greater acknowledgment than the structure of authorial attribution allows.

First and greatest thanks must go to my chair, Professor Karen Brazell, who took me on (no doubt against her better inclinations) as her “last graduate student,” a title I will proudly bear well beyond my graduate days. Karen, who taught this former narrative addict to read and love poetry, showed the greatest patience with me as I struggled to define my project, and bore with me through my lengthy drafts and stylistic peccadilloes. It is thanks to her strong but gentle hand that this dissertation bears even the slightest similarity to an academic product, and though ultimately I proved a recalcitrant subject, her advice will stay with me, hopefully refining my future projects.

My committee members, Professors Brett de Bary and Anyi Pan, also played powerful roles in shaping this dissertation. I have always considered Brett a magician for her ability to transform my crude ideas into meaningful academic constructions in her descriptions of my project, descriptions I avidly tried to replicate in the rewriting process, albeit with the skill of that infamous magician’s apprentice. To Anyi, his warmth and support, I owe the acceptance and legitimization of my burgeoning interest in Japanese art within the confines of a literature program. He not only patiently showed me how to do art history, but it was his positive response to my tentative proposals on dissertation topic that allowed me to go forward on it with some confidence.

Although for unfortunate reasons of protocol I could not include her as an official member of my committee, Professor Kyoko Selden played perhaps the greatest role in this project, as well as in my personal transformation from a snot-

nosed kid who doubted he could ever decipher surimono's scribbles. She did this by sacrificing her own time for me, in independent studies extending over two years, during which she offered not only suggestions for reading calligraphy, but also shared her encyclopedic knowledge of Japanese poetry and cultural history. Many of the readings in this dissertation were made for my classes with her, and without her advice and corrections, I might indeed have been a "following a horse's ass" (a private reference, related to my wishful misreading of a verse in Senshū's *Hatsuuma*) throughout most of this dissertation.

Among the many others I wish to thank at Cornell, I give special place to Ellen Avril, Curator of East Asian Art at the Johnson Museum, who showed me how to work with art in a museum setting and enabled me to put on an exhibition and write a catalogue on surimono, advancing my professional skills. Fred Kotas, Cornell's Japanese bibliographer, provided not only constant moral support but also ready access to the sources and research pointers required to make this project come to fruition. I also wish to thank Professors Tom LaMarre, Naoki Sakai, Victor Koschmann, Joan Piggott and Tomiko Yoda for the opportunities they gave me to experience different approaches to academic work, opening and enriching my possibilities for thought. Finally, warm words must go to my classmates who helped me psychologically and intellectually to complete this project, especially Jayanthi Salinger, Trent Maxey and Seth Jacobowitz.

Continuous support from Cornell University, with Sage Fellowships, FLAS Grants and Teaching Assistantships throughout my seven years, allowed me to study in this field and focus with unbroken concentration on my dissertation.

In the academic world beyond Cornell, I give special thanks to Professor Kira Sueo of Waseda University, who kindly met with me and listened to my ideas in the early stages of this project. His support was foundational in both the form of this

thesis and the construction of individual ideas within it. Professor Scott Johnson of Kansai University, though a more recent acquaintance, has been no less influential, correcting a number of mistaken ideas and gaffs in my writing. His warmth and openness has brought to my attention many important issues in *haikai* surimono, and with incredible generosity, he read and carefully edited not only all of my wordy chapter drafts, but also my deleted chapters on the transition from *haikai* to *kyōka* aesthetics through *ehaisho*, *ukiyoe* and *egoyomi*, and on Buson and the Kamigata tradition of surimono. I also wish to thank Professor Kobayashi Fumiko of Hōsei University, who assisted me with both my readings and understanding of *kyōka* surimono, and Professor Eckehard May, who did the same for *haikai*. Finally, although I was only able to communicate with them after the completion of this project, very special thanks must go to Professors John Carpenter and Roger Keyes, whose foundational work on surimono has its mark on the very existence of this dissertation, not to mention the ideas within it.

Lastly, on the home front, warm appreciation goes Kumiko, who somehow managed to put up with a million “Kumichan, kore nani?” and kept me alive during a few months of “white heat” writing, as well as to Kai and Tak, who accompanied me silently on my lap during many computer sessions, lending warmth to the often isolating sessions of research and writing in the cold Ithaca winters.

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Introduction

Reading Surimono

On an auspicious date, or *kichijitsu* (吉日), early in the fifteen-day New Year's season of the fifth year of the Bunsei 文政 Era (1822), a pair of amateur poets made their appearance at a pre-arranged gathering at a teahouse, restaurant or other public space for rent in the city of Edo.¹ They brought with them congratulations and presents for their acquaintances, fellow members of their poetry club, sharing with these kindred spirits the buoyant experience of a fresh start, a new spring, and another year added to the store of their lives.² Each of the two poets perhaps carried with him a satchel in which he had wrapped his New Year's gifts, a stack of gorgeously printed poetry presentation sheets, bearing his own poetry, along with that of his colleague.³ The theme for their presentation this year was the tea ceremony, a practice they and several of their companions may have engaged in as a hobby, or possibly even as a business interest, though certain at any rate to impress their fellows with its tastefulness and refinement. For their gifts, although extended as gestures of good

¹ Traditional New Year's ceremonies and celebrations extended from the final night of the preceding year to the full moon on the fifteenth day of the first month. The first poetry meeting of the year, called *saitan-biraki* (歳旦開き), which for nineteenth century *kyōka* groups included surimono exchanges, likely took place fairly early within this period, but probably not on the first two days, which were reserved for a variety of other events with familial and more formal relations. The possible "lucky days" for the auspicious first meeting were determined by the specific calendar for that year, so varied annually. Restaurants and tea houses, in some cases sites of high cultural sophistication, played an important role as meeting places in Edo's "floating world" (浮世) culture, as they did in Kyōto for its literati and *haikai* poets, and are celebrated in commercial prints, especially in several series made on them in the nineteenth century by Kunisada, Hiroshige and Yoshiiku, among others.

² The first day of the year in the lunar-solar calendar fell sometime between January 21 and February 20 in the modern Julian calendar—the exact date depending on the configuration of the previous year—and was considered to mark the beginning of spring. A year was added to everyone's age count, figured by the year cycles one had been a part of rather than the day of one's birth, making New Year also a shared "birthday" of sorts, and therefore a personal—as well as communal, natural and cosmological—"fresh start." This complex, variable calendar system, originated in China, was officially adopted in Japan in 604, according to an account in the *Nihonshoki*, and as we will see, was a source for much creativity in the Tokugawa Period (1600-1868). It remained in use until the third day of the twelfth month of the fifth year of Meiji, which officially became January 1, 1873 as the Meiji government made the Julian calendar the new official standard.

³ These satchels are sometimes illustrated or referred to on surimono. As will be seen shortly, the reference to *utabukuro* (歌袋 • "bag of songs") in the second verse of our poets' surimono suggests that the stringed pouch with square lacquer box in the image holds surimono. See Chapter Two, figure 6 for another illustration of a surimono pouch.

feeling and respectful consideration for others, were prepared with the knowledge that they were going to be examined quite closely—down to even the smallest details—as representations of sensibilities and intelligence of the givers, and ultimately compared to those of their colleagues in a spirit of playful competition. Wit, beauty, “classical” references,⁴ seasonal suitability and subtle integration of text and image were just some of the criteria by which their “gift” would be judged.

Not isolated, spontaneous or private acts of generosity then, these presentation sheets were in fact part of a grand exchange in which the poets would receive a similarly shaped and polished work each time they gave one of their own away. Recipients would appreciate their gifts gratefully, but also critically, being under some pressure themselves to recognize the devices, allusions and word games the works contained—a pressure released in laughter when their riddles had been solved or explained away. Doubtless, the most striking and original pieces became topics for

⁴ Recently, the term “classical,” as used in reference to Japanese art and literature, has rightly come under some scrutiny, being an ideologically charged concept borrowed from European history and applied imperialistically to a non-European case—see Elizabeth Lillehoj, ed. Critical Perspectives on Classicism in Japanese Painting, 1600-1700 (University of Hawaii Press, 2004). It is for this reason, perhaps, that Haruo Shirane, editor of the critical Inventing the Classics: Modernity, National Identity and Japanese Literature, employs the somewhat convoluted term “cultural memory” to describe exalted elements of the past in his Traces of Dreams: Landscape, Culture Memory and the Poetry of Bashō (Stanford University Press, 1998). In my opinion, this debate on “classical” much resembles those historians have had for decades on the applicability of terms like “feudal” or “medieval” to the Japanese case. Although it is essentially distorting to define stages of Japanese art or history neatly according to models built on European contingencies, there is also some value in rising above regional distinctions and recognizing the common elements in human civilizations—the comparative view. And what is more important in this endeavor than terminology itself is a clearly defined statement of a given term’s content. Unexamined, “classical” may easily bring with it European cultural assumptions (no more, however, than another currently unexamined universal, “modernity.”) I will continue to use the term classical in a general way throughout this dissertation, however, as I do believe that there is an exalted, vaunted past that inspires creativity in Edo Japan, as in Renaissance Italy. The content of “the classical” of course differs substantially between ancient Greece and Nara or Heian Japan, but not the *status* of the past-made-authoritative. It is for this reason that I define as “classical” *any* element that is perceived by its user as both clearly of the past and of enduring value, from the Amaterasu myth to the “classical *ukiyo-e*” style of Moronobu, summoned in some nineteenth century surimono. I resist, therefore, defining any one period or style as “classical,” but do recognize that certain periods and styles hold a stronger sense of value to its latter-day (in this case, Edo) observers, with greater recognition typically given to the highly refined and elegant. These qualities will also thus be described as being “classical” when they are clearly associated with a past style that holds authority for the present.

conversation and shared appreciation after the event, if not singled out during it as well. Seeking this sort of recognition, our amateur poets had carefully worked their verses to a smooth-surfaced complexity, perhaps presenting them for reaction at an earlier gathering of their poetry group, where “tea ceremony” could have been a set theme for composition, and receiving advice or approval from its leader (判者・“judge”). When their words were deemed perfect, they had taken them to a publisher specializing in privately commissioned productions, who began to coordinate with a group of sympathetic experts to give the poets’ ideas a suitable material form.⁵ It was likely through his introduction, for example, that the poets had hired Ryūryūkyō Shinsai 柳 居辰斎 (active c.1799-1823), a highly respected disciple of the famed surimono master designer Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 (1760-1849), to illustrate their verses for them, as well as a professional calligrapher to give their words graceful form.⁶

⁵ Surimono publishers formed a distinct subsection of the Tokugawa Era industry, with little overlap with commercial print publishers. In many cases, these “publishers” were primarily carvers or printers, who, however, went beyond their personal specialty to coordinate all aspects of surimono production. In some cases, most famously that of Kubo Shunman (to be discussed in Chapter 4), the printer’s studio was led by a designer as well. From early on, we have evidence that these surimono publishers were often involved in poetry themselves, their connections in poetic circles aiding them in gaining commissions, as well as sensitivity to the needs of the commissioners. Yoshida Uhaku, an eighteenth century printer to be discussed in Chapter 3, was a poet himself, while in the nineteenth century Shūchōdō Monoyana 秋長堂物築 (1761-c.1830s), a frequent contributor to surimono, engraved and printed surimono for a living. Many surimono picture designers were also members of poetry circles, giving them similar advantages, as well as deeper understanding of the codes of poetic techniques and associations for transforming words to imagery. We should be wary, therefore, of assigning hard, fixed places to each contributor in the process of creating a surimono, as figures often played multiple, overlapping roles (varying combinations of poet/designer/publisher/carver/printer/calligrapher). This implies, moreover, that purely commissioned “outside labor” (beyond paper production and delivery of goods) was not necessarily in this process, and the sensitivities of multiple skilled artisans went into the creation of these works.

⁶ That the calligraphy on surimono was most often commissioned from skilled professionals, rather than representing the poets’ own hands (which is sometimes, but rarely the case), can be seen in two pieces of evidence. First is the uniformity of style on a given piece (and even general uniformity among a poetic circle), such as that described by John Carpenter, “Allusions to Courtly Culture in the Bunka-Bunsei Era” in Mirviss, Joan Ed., *Bunka Bunsei no judama no surimono* (Tokyo: Ōta Museum and Nihon Keizai Shinbun, 2000), 41. The second type of evidence consists of certain errors of transcription that slipped into the copying process. In a letter to Kitō dated the seventh day of the third month of 1777, Yosa Buson, for example, notes that there has been a switch made in the Chinese characters for one of his surimono poems, and urges his disciple to visit Kissen, the publisher, to correct

Almost certainly, the commissioning poets had some conception of what they would like to see as the image for their presentation, and Shinsai gave their ideas a graceful material form, creating a prototype for review that was cleverly related to their poetry.⁷ Once approved, Shinsai's final design, drawn with a fine brush on thin, translucent paper, was sent to a block carver (彫師), who pasted it face down onto a plank of hard cherry wood, which he then cut and planed away until only the lines of the image were left in relief.⁸ Several impressions of this outline block, called the key-block, were taken in black *sumi* (墨 • ground and liquefied charcoal), and sent back to the publisher for final review with his clients, who, likely with the designer's supervision, chose the colors and effects they desired for the final product. At least one copy was passed from there to the master calligrapher, who inscribed the words of the poets to fit elegantly around the image, and this was then forwarded to a carver specializing in text, who prepared a separate block just for our amateurs' poems.⁹ The

it. See Hisamatsu Senichi, ed., *Koten Haibungaku Taikei Vol. 12* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1973). Roger Keyes has also presented a fascinating case study of a surimono "first run error" in which the calligrapher reversed two *kana* in a poem, changing its meaning. The piece was subsequently reprinted, correcting the error with a plug in the calligraphy block. See "Kuniyoshi's Low Tide at Susaki" in *Andon* No. 3 (1981) 77-79.

⁷ My view that the commissioners of surimono were intimately involved in the planning of imagery is at odds with the conventional assumption that artists were left entirely to their own devices in illustrating poetry on surimono. This common assumption, in my opinion, is led by the modern desire to position the signing artist at the center, fitting surimono into constructions of the artwork and the vaunted position of the creative artist as individual genius dominant since the Renaissance. In fact, both historical evidence and the content of certain surimono suggest that some designs had to have been conceived (at least mentally) *before* the writing of the poetry.

⁸ To challenge further the distinctions between "artist" and "craftsman" in this process, we might note that nineteenth century examples of *shita-e* (下絵 • sketches for carving) for commercial prints often only indicate cloth patterns and the like in shorthand, leaving the carver to fill out the design with tasteful detail. That carvers sometimes took creative liberties with artists' designs is apparent in an extant letter from Hokusai to his publisher, in which he complains that the carver hired for his recent work insists on giving his figures the "Utagawa nose," referring to the leader of this school's [Toyokuni I's] penchant for a sharply hooked nose in his kabuki portraits. See "Hokusai's Letters" in Gian Carlo Calza's *Hokusai* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2003), 79. Keyes (*ibid.*, 77-78) also notes that multiple carvers were often involved in the process of making a single print, with experts doing the fine work such as hands and face, while less skilled carvers were responsible for cloth patterns and larger outlines. For multiple-sheet works, more than one printer was often involved as well, to prevent a single printer from reselling the full work on his own, under-cutting the market price (Keyes, *ibid.*).

⁹ The special care shown in the division of text and image onto separate blocks, not commonly practiced in commercial printmaking, demonstrates the importance of the calligraphy on surimono. It has been

other copies, marked with colors and effects, were sent back to the main carver, who cut yet more blocks, one block side for each pigment to be employed, plus additional for dry printing, using a system of registration marks to ensure perfect alignment.¹⁰ This set of blocks was then delivered to an expert printer (摺師) who took impressions of them on special paper of a thick, creamy type—made by peasants in the provinces through an exacting process involving soaked, well-beaten, purified and strained mulberry pulp—cut into the form that had become standard for poetic presentation sheets.¹¹ Beginning with the key-block and adding colors and effects layer by layer, the printer masterfully mixed, then applied pigments by brush to the raised parts of the blocks, laid paper on top and rubbed it with stiff, corded pad, or *baren* (馬連)¹² to assure a strong, even impression, examining each sheet as he pulled it up and rejecting

argued that there may also have been a commercial incentive for publishers to produce surimono this way, as it allowed pictorial blocks to be easily ‘recycled’ for book illustrations or other surimono—see G.C. Uhlenbeck, Ed., *The Poetic Image: The Fine Art of Surimono* (Leiden, 1987), 37. But it was easy enough to carve away a text unwanted for such works, easier and far less expensive in fact, than using a different block for text originally. It is true, however, that this division allowed for recyclable surimono images, especially in late nineteenth century *haikai* surimono, for which, to reduce costs, some poets chose generic images from a publisher’s stock rather than commissioning a unique image for their particular poetry. See also Asano, “Surimono Gaikan” in *Suijintachi no okurimono: Edo no surimono* (Chiba Museum of Art, 1998), 8-9.

¹⁰ This system of registration marks, required for full color printing, was apparently (according to nineteenth century sources like Ōta Nanpo and Kyokutei Bakin) first developed in the 1740s, and perfected in the 1760s in relation to privately printed calendars. Advances in printing technology bear a close relation to movements in privately commissioned works like surimono, in which financial gain was not the object, and the desire to stand out from the ordinary led to the employment of costly, progressive techniques. In this manner, the standards for commercial prints were raised above the “bottom line” status quo, for as soon as the public had seen the products of better technology, there was no going back. See Kobayashi Tadashi’s introduction to *Nishikie no tanjō: Edo shōmin bunka no kaika* (Tōkyō Metropolitan Edo-Tōkyō Museum, 1996), 10 for a *kyōshi* (madcap verse in Chinese style) from Ōta Nanpo’s 1767 *The Literary Collection of Master Sleepyhead* describing this very effect: “since the rise of full color prints / not a single two-color print can be sold...”

¹¹ The type of paper employed for surimono from its very origins was *hōshogami* (奉書紙・“announcement paper”) so named for its use in ritual or official communications. *Hōshogami* was one of the finest of the many refined Tokugawa paper types, thick, white and cloth-like in texture, yet firm enough to be held without crumpling, and so suitable for exchange. The standard size for surimono in the nineteenth century was a sixth cut of a full *hōshogami* sheet, making a square print sometimes now called the *kakuban* (角判・“square print”), or more accurate historically, the *shikish-bani* (色紙判). See Appendix II for standard surimono sizes.

¹² These characters were applied to *baren* only in modern times, based on a theory that early *baren* used braided horse hair. The term does not have a Chinese equivalent.

any inferior, before laying it aside to dry and moving on to the next.¹³ He worked sequentially through the printing blocks, over a period of days, as the approximately two hundred copies of the amateurs' presentation sheet stage by stage bloomed into full color around him (Figure 1).¹⁴ Some of the advanced effects he employed, which have given surimono the nickname "prints by elbow," were quite dramatic, requiring extreme pressure to work parts of the paper into raised or depressed surfaces, while others involved expertly applying water, a scraping knife or patterned weave cloth to pigments on the block to create textures and subtle changes in tone (Figure 2).¹⁵ The final product, called a *surimono* (摺物) had grown out of the seeds of these amateurs' own poetry, but was in fact the colorful result of many talented hands and days of carefully focused labor, which showed in its elegant, polished appearance, rich, textured surfaces meeting the demands of its layered, poetic content.

Curiously though, as our amateurs now began formally to present copies of their surimono, a sheet at a time, for individual admiration and response from the attendees at their group's annual exchange, the process of production was largely

¹³ Like the carver, the printer's input in the process of making a print had an element of creativity. Colors were often noted in shorthand on the key-block impression, but the actual tones used were up to the printer's discretion, particularly as pigments were mixed from memory and practiced intuition, not by any formulas. Some freedom was available too in the exact employment of special effects.

¹⁴ The exact size of most surimono editions is unknown, but it is likely that between 100 and 250 copies was standard for works like the present one. Not all of these copies, obviously, were for direct exchange, with many sent out to friends, acquaintances and fellow poets throughout Japan. Textual references to surimono mention editions of 150, 300 and even up to 500 copies for more prominent works.

¹⁵ Surimono employed the full range of proven, advanced printing techniques—and even some experimental—that for reasons of cost and time were less often utilized in commercial prints. These include printing with metals to simulate silver and gold, also mother-of-pearl, brass shavings, mica and *gofun* (胡粉), extensive use of embossing (空刷り・*karazuri*), burnishing and fading (ぼかし・*bokashi*). On the tea ceremony surimono, for example, there is a silver-like metallic powder printed on the rim and design of the dish, the textured wooden surface of which is created through overprinting, with subtle fading on the black of the kettle and raised embossing around its top. A special, grainy technique has also been used to give the appearance of metal to the kettle's surface. Both the white cloth beneath the kettle and the orange cloth to its left are embossed, while there is also metallic printing on the bags and the frog, as well as overprinting on the black, foreground cup. Each of these additional effects was time-consuming and sometimes difficult to create, requiring the careful touch of a master printer.



Figure 1: “Tea Vessel Landscape.” A *shikishi-ban* surimono for the New Year of 1822, with *kyōka* verses by Chinjōrō Yumenari and Shimpūen Futami Iwakage and illustration by Ryūryūkyō Shinsai. [Image from Roger Keyes, *The Art of Surimono: Privately Published Japanese Woodblock Prints and Books in the Chester Beatty Library*. London: Sotheby, 1985.]



Figure 2: The “Tea Vessel Landscape” surimono of Figure 1, in raking light to reveal textures. [Image from Roger Keyes, *The Art of Surimono: Privately Published Japanese Woodblock Prints and Books in the Chester Beatty Library*. London: Sotheby, 1985.]

forgotten, and the prints came to stand as a reflection of the givers' own personal qualities. Certainly the "Shinsai" signature was there for all to see, as a touch of authority—and also as an advertisement for those who might enjoy his design and wish to commission from him in the next seasonal cycle—but Shinsai, however well known, was a hired craftsman.¹⁶ It was the poets who had brought this work into being, and their compositions that were at the heart of the rich, refined material form that had been given to them. Therefore it was neither difficult nor entirely wrong to assume that these works were products of the givers' own sensibilities and cultivated tastes, taking image, calligraphy, glowing paper and poetry as inextricable parts of a single expression, embodying their own talents and values. In fact, reception of these New Year gifts implicitly relied on a structure of appreciation built up over a millennium and based on an earlier technique of inscription, hand-inscribed calligraphy, as a material embodiment of the cultivation of its maker's mind and spirit through practice. As in the poetic letters or presentations of Heian courtiers and ladies, also scrutinized for their subtle details of style, decorative paper tones and poetic nuances that reflected the feelings and qualities of the senders, every choice in a surimono could be—and, following the structure for appreciating such works, was demanded to be—read as a sign of its maker's sensibilities and intelligence.¹⁷

Surimono, therefore, represent the new application of a technology (woodblock printing) to an established form (the poetic presentation sheet) that had long been

¹⁶ Although designers had the privilege of signing their work far more often than the carvers and printers (who nevertheless sometimes include their signatures and/or seals), the word for these "artists," *eshi* (絵師 • "picture craftsperson") suggests that they were considered of the same rank as the *horishi* (彫師 • "carving craftsperson") and *surishi* (摺師 • "printing craftsperson"). *Eshi*, however, tended to have a more public role as celebrities, although not unlike designers in the fashion world today, were not directly responsible for the carrying out of their designs in physical form. The position of the modern designer, in fact, is parallel to the surimono commissioner, who could take full credit for a work as its "architect," leaving actual construction to skilled laborers.

¹⁷ I have given historical/fictional examples of this kind of reading, in which the character of the sender is interpreted through the material form of the note he/she has had delivered, in Chapter 2, drawing primarily from *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 but also looking at some medieval and early modern letters.

associated with earlier techniques (handwriting, painting), allowing the historically developed manner of reception of that form (calligraphic style reflecting state of mind, for example) to be applied seamlessly to these new products, with no sense of anomaly. In so doing, the primarily merchant commissioners of surimono could portray themselves as people of extensive knowledge and cultivation, in part through their own poetry and blueprints for their works, but also through the borrowed hands they hired to give their surimono polished and perfected form.

But this kind of “virtual effect,” produced by the use of technology and advanced techniques of craftsmanship in a family-based, specialist economy, was not the only factor supporting belief in these works as representations of personal excellence. As surimono exchanges were reciprocal, givers in turn playing the part of recipients, their structure was self-supporting, with no incentive to poke holes in the impressions of complete mastery the prints presented. The role of the recipient, rather, as we can see in period illustrations (Figure 3),¹⁸ was to appreciate the work in animated conversation with the giver, admiring its form, reading and interpreting the poetry, and following its sometimes-convoluted and witty path into the physical qualities of the print, its illustration and the relation of that image to the poems.¹⁹ And it was this step, once again based on a traditional way of “reading” the poetic letter or

¹⁸ The image, not coincidentally, comes from a *kyōka* anthology edited by Magao, the *Yomo zaeuta nazukushi* (四方戯歌名尽・“Playful Poems for Every Name, from the Yomo Group”) of 1809. This and another genre illustration of a *kyōka awase* from the same work were introduced by Suzuki Jūzō in his *Ehon to Ukiyo-e* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1979), following his presentation of them at the first International Surimono Symposium in 1977. Of course, it is always difficult to separate journalism from idealization in such period images, but even as an imaginative representation of what a surimono exchange *should be*, it has significance, not only for representing Magao’s ideals, but also for publicly setting a norm and standard for subsequent surimono exchanges.

¹⁹ The following quotation from the 1794 miscellany *Shunkō-roku* (浚溝録・“The Ditch-Dredging Record”) of Awazu Gikei 栗津儀圭 (?-1799), for example, could stand as a description of the spectacled man on the left in Figure 3, and reveals the kind of attention surimono received from its recipients: “[someone] having distributed a surimono with a collection of good things, this old man put on his glasses, and scanned it carefully over and again in detail.” (むまいことぞろへを摺ものにしてくばれば、いかな老人も眼鏡をかけてくりかへしくりかへし委細に見て).

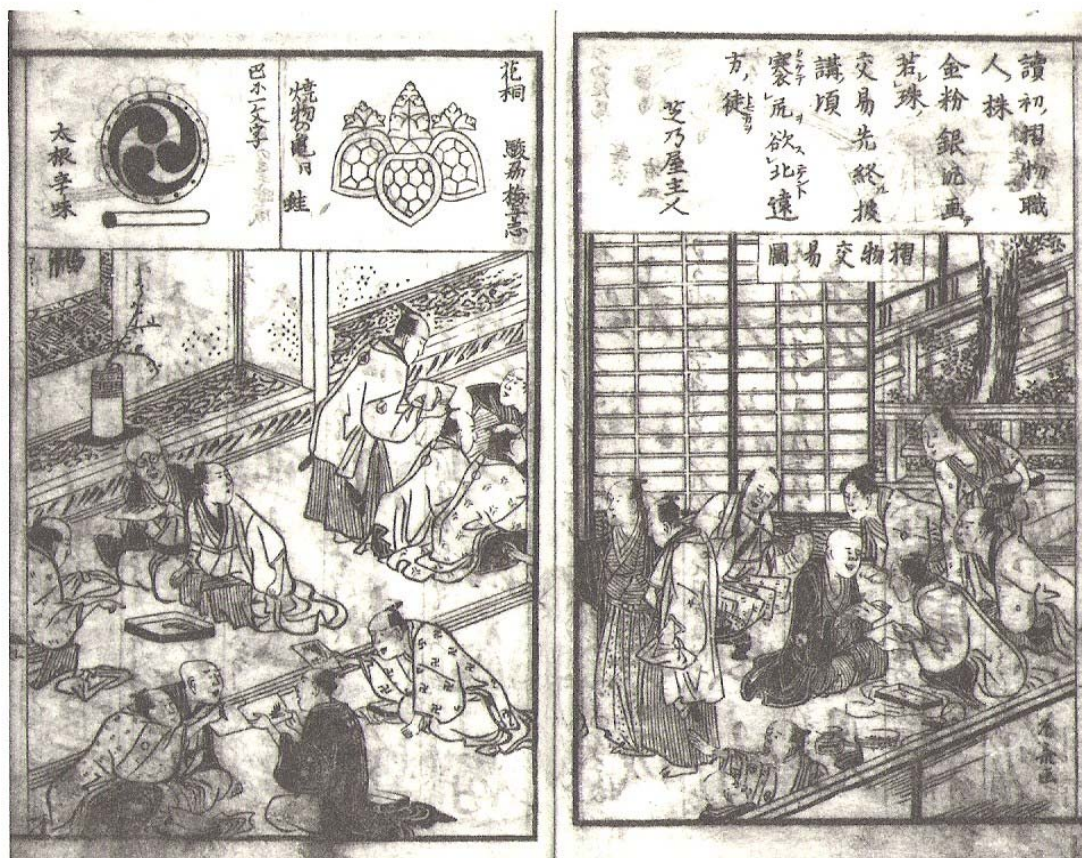


Figure 3: *A Picture of the Surimono Exchange* (摺物交易図). An illustration by Ryūryūkyō Shinsai from Yomo Magao Ed., *Playful Poems for Every Name, from the Yomo Group* (四方戯歌名尽), 1809. [Image from Theodore Bowie, with James Kenney and Fumiko Togasaki. *Art of the Surimono*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Art Museum, 1979.]

presentation, in which every material aspect was a representation of feeling and poetic content, that allowed the commissioners to retain the centrality of authorship, as the “architects” of surimono, if only but rarely part of their construction crew. Just as a court lady might select a color or pattern of paper based on the mood she wished to convey, without actually having a part in the making of that paper, the commissioners of surimono took advantage of the skilled labor that could be mobilized with money to create a form for their printed presentations in keeping with its content, regulating its construction into the final product. Therefore, regardless of the “borrowed hands” and virtual effects of these prints as self-reflections, as poetry remained the central, determining aspect of these pieces, as well as the one contribution that was fully the responsibility of the commissioners, they retained the lead place as the informing minds standing behind the form of any particular surimono—and this not only virtually, but in reality.

Nevertheless, as recipients at this 1822 exchange were presented with the tea utensil surimono, they were probably struck first by the soft colors, changing textures and metallic glints of its bright surface, taking in the physical properties of the image even slightly before the realization that the work was related to the tea ceremony. After these immediate impressions, made by the appearance and meaningful form of the illustration, recipients turned to the poetry to confirm, deepen and/or readjust their expectations of content. On the right, the first amateur poet, who had playfully dubbed himself Chinjōrō Yumenari (枕上樓夢也・“On-the-Pillow-Tower It’s-a-Dream”),²⁰ had composed the following celebratory verse:

²⁰ Most likely a disciple of Issuisha Yumenari (一睡舎夢也), a member of the Tsubo-gawa (壺側) whose name appears in the Hokusai-illustrated *Azuma asobi* of 1799. If this Yumenari were identical with Issuisha Yumenari, he would have been a senior poet, and most likely have taken the position of honor on the print (see note 20). Information on Edo *kyōka* poets is notoriously scarce. Kanō Kaian’s *Kyōka jinmei jisho* of 1928 (Tokyo: Bunkōdō and Hirota shoten) provides biographical details where available, but is largely a list of names.

<i>Yaya haru no</i>	A bit like spring's	It looks like
<i>Tatecha nimo nite</i>	Just begun:	The tea of early spring:
<i>Tenmoku no</i>	Fine, powdery snow	A frothy cupful whisked
<i>Yama ni ippai</i>	Pouring down	In the Tenmoku ware
<i>Fureru awayuki</i>	On Mt. Tenmoku	Beside a sugary sweet ²¹

His poem was full of puns and word games, making use of the literal meanings of a famous brand of tea ware (天目・*Tenmoku*, named after the Chinese mountain area from which it originated) and a brand of sweet confection popular for the tea ceremony (淡雪・*Awayuki*, “powdery snow”) to imagine an early spring landscape with fine snow falling heavily on a mountaintop, a scene as refreshing as the first tea of the New Year. To create these doubled meanings and images, moving back and forth between landscape and tea ceremony, he had relied on devices established in native-court poetry (和歌・*waka*), especially pivot words (掛詞・*kakekotoba*) and related words (縁語・*engo*), with puns on “spring standing [arriving]”/ “spring tea” (*haru no tatecha*), and “whisking a cupful”/ “snowing heavily” (*ippai fureru*). His poem thus had a shifting, uncertain surface, in which language was employed not for its conventional one-to-one representations, but rather explicitly arranged to exploit the ambiguities of its multiple significations to the full. The ostensive object of his cleverness was to bring smiles to the faces of his readers in this celebratory season, though also to impress them with his wit, ingenuity and poetic prowess. In his very approach to language, however, the breakdown of the singular, stable relationship between words (signifiers) and referents (signifieds) suggests a worldview in which things are never simply what they appear to be, but ever-shadowed with alternate meanings and hidden significations, an approach I will argue is in alignment with the political dimension of surimono exchanges.

²¹ やや春のたて茶にも似てて天目の山に一はいふれる淡雪.

Yumenari's senior partner on the print,²² Jinpūen Futami Iwakage (神風園二見岩影) whose poetic name suggests a possible connection with the Shintō revival movement, had produced a song that complemented his own:

<i>Ima made wa</i>	Until now
<i>Kuchi wo shimetaru</i>	Their mouths have been closed
<i>Kawazura ga</i>	The strings of the frogs'
<i>Uta no fukuro no</i>	Bags of songs
<i>Himo nobite naku</i>	Stretch with a croak ²³

Jinpūen had subtly echoed the first verse with the image of the closed mouth (either a person's or the depicted kettle's before the anticipated first tea), but then taken the poem in quite a different direction, referencing spring with the introduction of the seasonal word (季語・*kigo*) frog and even tying it obliquely to the practice of the surimono exchange itself. The key "switch word" here is *uta*, which performs double duty as "frogs' songs" (*kawazura ga uta*) and "bag of songs" (*uta no fukuro*), and with this layering the opening of a satchel of poetry prints is made parallel to a natural process, the stretching of a frog's throat, both welcoming spring with song.²⁴

Following this doubled signification, the bag is given a string (*himo*), which when

²² The position of poets on a surimono reveals something of their status and roles on the print. For *kyōka* surimono, the first poet (on the right) was usually the main commissioner, who handled the menial tasks of having the work prepared and also paid for most of the costs. If there were three or four poets on a surimono, the next one or two might also share his role, though the lead poet (on the left) was often a star in the *kyōka* world, who was paid for his appearance. In this work, as there are but two poets, neither extremely famous, the pair were perhaps equal partners, though Jinpūen takes the superior position. With earlier, *haikai* surimono, however, the right-left alignment is reversed, the first poet taking the position of honor as the leader and editor of the work, the others being mere contributors of verse. We also know from Buson's letters that the cost of *haikai* surimono could be shared equitably among a group. Likely this was also the case with some *kyōka* surimono created as representations of groups.

²³ 今までは口をしめたる蛙らか歌の袋のひものひて啼. I have re-transliterated the final line of this poem from Roger Keyes' suggested "*himo no hikunaki*" in The Art of Surimono: Privately Published Japanese Woodblock Prints and Books in the Chester Beatty Library (London: Sotheby's, 1985) 342 (plate 296 on 326), re-reading Keyes' suggested "*ku*" as *te*, and thus part of the verb *nobite*, therefore requiring that the final verb, given in a single Chinese character (without *kana* for its inflection) be parsed in *shūshikei* form.

²⁴ *Utabukuro* (歌袋) refers to a bag traditionally hung from a pillar in aristocratic homes and used for the collection of *waka* drafts. The stringed pouch in the illustration, however, makes it clear that the reference here is also to the surimono satchel. Contemporary surimono practice is in this way overlaid with courtly tradition.

extended releases a voice, like the croak of a frog. This implied “opening” is then reminiscent of the mythical origin of spring, when the boulder is rolled away from the closed mouth of the cave where the Sun Goddess Amaterasu (天照大神) is in retreat, and she is enticed back into the world with music and bawdy dance.²⁵ Both the poet’s assumed name, literally “Divine-Style-Garden Look-Twice Shadows-on-the-Rocks,”²⁶ and the image of strings stretching suggest this primordial scene in which the Goddess is drawn from her cave by the laughing cries of the gods at the sight of Ame no Uzume (天宇受売) dancing right out of her clothes.

Having read the poetry, the recipient of the print now returned to the illustration, attempting to puzzle out the manner in which the verses had been transformed into material form. Here, the mere mention of tea in the first poem summons up the tea ceremony and its various utensils, which were often highly valued antiques, admiration of which was as much a part of the ceremony as the drinking of tea itself. In presenting an image of tea vessels thus, the commissioners of this surimono were implicitly inviting the viewer to linger over its surface, as one might over actual rare or imported tea implements, identifying their make and style. The aura of the cherished vessels was in this manner transferred to the surimono gift itself, borrowing the admiration and high evaluation bestowed on these objects, as though the gift were of actual vessels and not just a highly polished image of them. Here again, the spirit of imagination is in play, imbuing the surimono with meanings beyond the literal, as the gift image took on, in the virtual and ritual space of

²⁵ The *shimetaru* of this poem contrasts with the *akeru* (open) of the New Year (as in the conventional “*akemashite omedetō*”), implying the change from last year to this through the negation of the closure.

²⁶ “Futami Iwakage” suggests the sacred husband-wife rocks (double pillars of washed-away stone, often strung with sacred *shimenawa* ropes) found on Japanese shorelines. Yet Amaterasu is drawn from her cave not only by hearing her fellow gods’ laughter, but also by seeing her own shadowy reflection in a mirror placed by the boulders before the cave, making her jealous that another goddess has taken her place. Taking *kage* as “image” (or even “rays”), the “twice-seen reflection on the rocks” suggests this scene.

exchange, aspects of what it portrayed. The importance of this sort of “pretend currency” in these exchanges can be seen in the selection of subject matter in works made for them, especially in still lifes, which glitter like a scoop taken from the proverbial treasure chest. Gems, coins, bars of silver and gold, crowns, jewelry, fine brocade, shining lacquer, magic charms and similar items exalted by the primarily merchant commissioners of surimono fill the surfaces of their prints, enhancing the impression of luxury already embodied in the materials and production process of the prints themselves. Indeed, one certain way of moving one’s fellows at the surimono exchange was to pour one’s wealth, together with images of it, into the creation of a richly decorated surface, using metals that gleam like gold and silver, sparkling mica or a pearly inlay, to impress the recipient with the rich, extravagant quality of the gift, if not also the power and prestige of the giver. Precisely because these were gifts, moreover, such ostentation was acceptable, as it was posited for the delight of the recipient, not the self-aggrandizement of the giver, making the nineteenth century surimono exchanges pot-latch style competitions in extravagant generosity. The ritual effect of such subject matter, moreover, was to wish riches and good fortune upon the recipient, for just as auspicious words in poetry had power to influence reality, images of wealth could produce what they represented. For such a reading, once again, it will be necessary to contextualize surimono within one of its traditional influences, namely the presentation of felicitous writings (吉書 • *kissho*) at the New Year as a means of ritually influencing reality.

But the more common and substantial means to impress the recipient of a surimono was with the learned qualities of one’s material, and the lively intelligence apparent in the intricately related design it was given in the print. Having admired the tea vessels and read the poetry, the recipient might then notice that the image bears further traces of the poems’ content, as well as embodying their specific approach to

language. The mountain in the first verse is subtly present in the form of the so-called *Fuji-gata* (富士型 • Mt. Fuji shape) iron kettle, the mouth of which is closed, as in the second verse, by a lid that appears as a snowy cap. With this realization, one can then see that the still life of tea implements as a whole wittily echoes the first verse's oscillation between vessel and natural scene by creating a miniature landscape of these utensils. The tray at the base of the "mountain," with its ripple pattern of worked wood, appears as a round lake, while the various bags and satchels strewn around soften the contours of the other vessels into rolling hills. A frog paperweight, along with the bags echoing the second poem, seems to be coolly viewing the mountain scene, not far from its "lake." Meanwhile, the orange lacquer box that rises from the stringed satchel in the rear has a stylized plum pattern reminiscent of plovers, which typically fly over water. Although one would assume in the context of tea that this box contains goods for the ceremony, the second poem, with its reference to a stringed "bag of songs," lends the object a new context, suggesting that the container in fact holds poetic *surimono*, and that the *surimono* satchel is therefore a modern day equivalent of the courtly *uta-bukuro*.²⁷ The image itself thus shifts in various ways in relation to the poetry, becoming in fact the visual equivalent of the linguistic pivot, simultaneously implements and landscape, while the collection of objects functions according to the poetic rules of *engo*, with the frog paperweight, for example, harmonizing with the mountain scene, not far from the "water" and leafy cup patterns.²⁸ The finished illustration is therefore one that sensitively engages with the poems not only in literal content, but also in style and playfulness. There is no better way to describe this engagement than as the rendering of poetry in physical form, with

²⁷ See note 23. The *surimono* practice is itself thus subtly fused with both a natural process (frogs welcoming spring with song, as humans do) and a classical activity.

²⁸ Frogs are traditionally associated in *waka* with *yamabuki*, yellow mountain roses, and the Ide Tamagawa, itself further associated with the boulders (*iwa*) of the poet's name and the noise of croaking frogs.

the images and their relationships to the text echoing the shifting and refined content of the verses themselves.

The genre of poetry in which these amateurs were working is typically referred to as *kyōka* (狂歌 • “madcap verse”), which in form aped the 5-7-5-7-7 syllabic structure of the courtly *tanka* (短歌 • “short song”) but took great liberties with its diction and content, and utilized its devices as a means unto themselves, generally for a pleasant, mildly comic effect. As an entertainment, *kyōka* was a genre with an ancient lineage, the fourteenth century collection *Hyakushu kyōka* (百酒狂歌 • “One Hundred Madcap Verses on Alcohol”) being the first to bear the genre’s name, though in oral form *kyōka* probably to the very origins of poetry as a “serious” endeavor, the light, tension-relieving counterpart of which it became.²⁹ In late eighteenth century Edo, however, *kyōka* was transformed from an elevated, elegant pastime into a more biting, satiric genre, which utilized the structures, techniques and most famous examples of canonical *waka* primarily in order to mock and invert them, and thereby challenge the accepted ideals and standards of high culture. Sometimes *kyōka* filled the form of the elite *tanka*, associated with the ancient court, with content and diction sharply at variance with tradition. Focusing on poverty, for example, Edo *kyōka* ridiculed the a-economic idealism of the aristocratic definers of the *waka* tradition, forcing stark materialism and worldly concerns into the structure of the *tanka*, directly alongside its most stilted devices, such as *makura kotoba* (枕詞 • set epithets). An Edo *kyōka* might start off sounding exactly like a courtly verse, with elevated diction and imagery, only to crash to earth in the final lines, in a witty utterance of particularly modern, urban concerns, expressed in the language of everyday life. Similarly, *kyōka* could quote liberally from a well-known ancient verse

²⁹ Mizuno Minoru, for example, notes that *kyōka*, as a comic variation of *waka*, existed long before this name was applied to it in the Kamakura Era. See *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, V.46: *Kibyōshi, senryū, kyōka* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1989) 435.

(本歌取り・*honkadori*) twisting a few words here and there to invert or radically transform its original meaning, often from sophisticated world weariness to a simple delight in the common structures of contemporary life, or from high-flown aesthetic concerns to plebian, bodily interests, such as food, drink and sex. This parody of tradition was directed through, but ultimately not necessarily at, the celebrated past, in order to challenge all of the assumed structures and hierarchies of meaning in contemporary life, as well as to show off the talents and knowledge of its makers (which precisely required, in fact, retaining some veneration for the canonized classics).

At the time our amateurs were designing their surimono, however, the aesthetics of Edo *kyōka* had largely transformed, from sharp-edged comedy to a more restrained and respectful use of the poetic tradition. *Kyōka* was now in many quarters going under a competing alias, *haikaika* (俳諧歌), a label that summoned up the 58 irregular verses of the nineteenth part of the *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (compiled c.914), the most celebrated collection of early *tanka*,³⁰ with all of the status and expectation this identification brought. Whereas early Edo *kyōka* was frequently vulgar and intentionally silly, willfully assuming a humble place in conventional hierarchies of value in order to be free of them, *haikaika* eschewed parody and slang

³⁰ *Haikaika* has been translated to English as “eccentric poems” by Helen Craig McCullough, who emphasizes that these *waka* are not primarily comic, as early modern critics believed, but rather simply at variance with courtly ideals of formal and emotional balance. See Brocade by Night: *Kokin Wakashū* and the Court Style in Japanese Classical Poetry (Stanford University Press, 1985), 486-489. Their singling out in a separate section of this first imperial anthology was unusual, and not repeated in others. The term *haikai* itself was borrowed from a Chinese anthology. As a genre, Tokugawa Era *haikai* is treated as distinct from *kyōka*, although they overlap in significant areas, particularly in the so-called “city *haikai*,” which relies in part on classical allusions and wordplay for its sophistication. It is one of the main contentions of this dissertation that the intimate links between *haikai* and Edo *kyōka* (later *haikaika*) have not been adequately explored, due perhaps to disciplinary divisions between those who study each form. The inability to see the exchanges and relations between these poetic genres leads to several blind spots in surimono definition and history. Particularly, it is essential to see how *kyōka* poets (many of whom also wrote *haikai*) appropriated the practical conventions established by *haikai*, such as group structure, monthly meetings, point-taking sessions, *saitan biraki*, New Year and spring anthologies and, of most importance here, surimono—especially those in large format.

for more elevated subject matter (such as the tea ceremony), and subtle classical allusions (such as the Amaterasu myth), attempting to become the revival—or continuation, as its promoters had it—of an ancient tradition of witty verse. Most surimono poems in nineteenth century Edo, although now called *kyōka*, were in actuality closer to what was then called *haikaika*, the term applied to the refined, elegant version of this genre by its foremost practitioner, the first professional *kyōka* poet in Edo, Shikatsube Utagaki Magao 鹿津部歌垣真顔, (1753-1829). As head of the suitably named *Yomo* (四方・“Four Directions”) poetry group, Magao made his influence felt not only on literally thousands of eager poets throughout Japan, whose verses he would “correct” for a fee, but also on the practices of surimono illustration and exchange, which developed in accord with his ideas as he rose to preeminence in the world of poetry. It was under Magao’s command, for example, that the now so-called “*kyōka* surimono” blossomed as the ultimate expression of the *haikaika* ideal of classical elegance, which in their exchanges, moreover, allowed surimono’s commissioners to play the part of talented aristocrats distributing beautiful poetic notes. Magao himself was the most frequent contributor to the so-called *kyōka* surimono, appearing on some 8% of extant works in this genre made in the nineteenth century, while simultaneously taking the superficial elements of the courtly revival to an almost absurd extreme in his personal habits and dress.³¹

The reinvention of *kyōka* as *haikaika*, like the growing classicism of surimono in content and use, can be seen as part of a comprehensive campaign, led by Magao

³¹ This 8% figure is based on a survey of eight major English and Japanese language works published on *kyōka* surimono since 1979, including Bowie (1979), Polster (1979), Keyes (1984, 1985), Mirviss (1995, 2000), Chiba (1997) and Rappard-Boon (2000), comprising a reference group of more than 2000 surimono. Magao was lampooned late in life for his excesses in superficial classicism, appearing at *kyōka* events in full court regalia, only meeting with students with a standing screen between them, and overtly celebrating his official recognition as a poetry master from the Nijō line in Kyōto. See Kasuya Hiroki’s “*Yadaya Meshimori kara mita Kaseiki no kyōkakai*” in *Suijintachi no okurimono: Edo no surimono*, (Chiba Museum of Art, 1997), 24, for a period account by Bakin that quotes a satiric verse comparing the self-satisfied old *kyōka* master to a *karakuri ningyō* of Okina that only dances when it puts on its mask.

and spearheaded mainly by similar bourgeois merchant poets, to recast the forms of contemporary life through the glow of an idealized past. One might identify an element of nouveau riche social climbing in this appropriation of court culture as the basis for defining merchant life, but for merchants, officially the lowest class in the fixed social order, despised and forced to assume a humble position in the world for their selfish exploitation of the market, there was in fact nowhere to climb.³² Rather, the only spaces for recreating one's identity and position in the world existed outside the official order, in pockets of privately defined meaning such as the surimono exchanges. It was for this reason that certain bourgeoisie with funds greater than their personal requirements chose to invest it in the commissioning of surimono, thereby transforming economic advantage into social and symbolic capital. For in the surimono exchange, a different set of values was employed, with recognition given to both stunning, sparkling surfaces and witty, learned, complex content, in which already layered *haikaika* verses were capped with additional meanings and references through illustration. One could take pride in the creation of a fine work, and also receive admiration and respect from others for it, with whom one's relationships were deepened through the act of exchange. To some extent the surimono exchange could be described as a space of fantasy, both because its rules were not those of the political realm outside of it, within the power structure of which it was nonetheless firmly embedded, and because the commissioners of surimono took credit for skills in these works that were not directly their own. Nevertheless, the benefits of these exchanges in social and symbolic capital were very real, if limited to the enclosed poetic circles,

³² Although class positions in the late Tokugawa Era were not as fixed as the promulgated reality of the shogunate would have them, the Confucian-based system of four fixed, hereditary classes, hierarchical in structure, was put forth as an essential fact of Tokugawa life, as seen in primers used in temple schools of the period. Until the waning years of Tokugawa Period, it was, in fact, only in exceptional circumstances that a merchant could buy his way into a samurai family, or a samurai willingly accept a lower status.

with the potential to redefine merchants' images of themselves and their class, positioning themselves, in fact, as having fully received the cultural inheritance of the talented courtiers of old, and rising as their contemporary manifestation.

The relation of *haikaika* to a vaunted, canonical past, moreover, influenced both the form and function of surimono. In the tea ceremony work, the dignified tone, traditional devices and past-orientated content of Edo *haikaika* have infiltrated its illustration, calligraphy, layout, and text-image relations. Courtliness is implicit in the format, aping the *shikishi* (色紙) poetry card, in the calligraphy, utilizing a high court style, and in the bright, albeit restrained colors and strong Yamato-e style patterning of the illustration, which also employs bits of metal and special printing effects such as embossing to give the appearance of a rich, aristocratic work. *Haikaika* additionally informs the symbolic language of surimono, textual and pictorial, which develops in nineteenth century Edo largely as a series of links between contemporary forms and the archetypes of historical models, uniting them through linguistic play and thematic overlap. The ordinary, closed mouth of a bag, frog or kettle becomes the closed mouth of Amaterasu's cave, tea ware a resonant setting in distant China, the surimono "bag of songs" the equivalent of the classical *utabukuro*, an elegant bag hung from the rafters of an aristocratic house, into which *waka* drafts were inserted. The very exchange of surimono, likewise, was an attempt to bring the subtle, poetic references, fine calligraphy and decorative, colored papers of ancient courtier's letters, such as those described in some detail in the *Tale of Genji*, to life in the present, with merchants as both their creators and interpreters. We can say then that the general ideals and principles of *haikaika*, as well as their specific application in particular poems, intimately shaped the appearance, content and uses of surimono in the nineteenth century.

The aesthetics of Edo *haikaika*, in fact, with its insistence on the intimate connections between the present and a past canonized as cultural memory, was perfectly suited to the New Year holiday, which also sought to eliminate the vagaries of time through the ritual repetition of forms, in a serious but bright spirit of reverence. Many of surimono's present day references are to the felicitous symbols of the New Year, the immediate time of the exchanges, though these in truth also rely heavily on traditional poetic imagery. Most of these New Year motifs were predetermined and repetitious—plums, warblers, purple mists, Adonis plants, the goddess Saohime, the seven herbs, bamboo and pines, sunrises over seas or mountains, the seven gods of good fortune and their treasure ship—but this very repetition was comforting, in summoning up memories of the past and the cyclical, undying nature of time. Such stock imagery, moreover, provided a base of stable material of which endless variations and associations could be made, so that surimono illustration was by no means limited to these themes. If one could trace the relationship between Shinsai's vessels and the snowy landscape of early spring, noting the subtle combination of young pines on the pale yellow bag at right, bamboo design on the tray, and plums on the orange lacquer box (松竹梅 • *shōchikubai*), the auspicious seasonal connections would be made. Moreover, Shinsai has quietly added a direct reference to the zodiac sign for Bunsei 5, the year of the horse, in the design on the side of one tea bowl. This surimono is thus both imminently present—innovative, timely and in contemporary style—and lit from deep within by the glow of idealized classical forms. Reference is made both to the contingent moment at hand, the New Year of 1822, and the established traditions of the poetic past. Past and present, in fact, become inseparable in the material form of the surimono, the physical manifestation of poetic ideals firmly rooted in the past, but taking a form suited to their immediate occasion, woodblock

printed works that masqueraded as no less than a modern version of the hand-inscribed poetic communications of old.

One of the central contentions of this dissertation is that poetry stands as the driving force directing almost every aspect of the surimono movement, from the content of particular works to the motivation of the form as a whole and the manner and context in which pieces were exchanged. And we must speak here of both general poetic ideals and principles, such as Magao's *haikaika* teachings, which set the boundaries of the field by establishing certain norms for the practice and uses of poetry, and the specific poems that appear on individual prints, which are transformed into their pictorial content and means of semantic functioning. More precisely, we have glimpsed how Magao's past-oriented "classicism" helped to shape a new standard format for surimono in the nineteenth century, the courtly *shikishi*,³³ a particular kind of structure, unifying past archetype and contemporary contingency, as well as the formal, albeit playful space of the surimono exchange, within which individual poets competed for place with distinctive expressions of wit, refinement and learning that generally fell within the compass of Magao's assertions on the nature of poetry and the relation of past to present. But competition for place, involving originality as well as the fulfillment of momentary standards, necessarily led to expansion of the field of practice, as poets attempted to gain recognition for themselves through nuanced utilizations of familiar poetic ideals. Thus the broader history of surimono, to draw back for a moment from our focus on the 1822 exchange as a particular example, followed a constant series of negotiations between general

³³ Among the earliest extant surimono in *shikishi* format, which has a long history in courtly poetic inscriptions and paintings, is an early nineteenth century work led by Magao, with a heavy air of classicism. See Roger Keyes, Surimono: Privately Published Prints in the Spencer Museum of Art (New York: Kodansha, 1984), No. 57, 136-7.

standards and specific practices in poetry, with the latter challenging, stretching and periodically transforming the former, leading to the development of mutating and competing poetic ideals. If poetic ideals and practices are unstable in this way, then, following the premise I have laid out here, we should expect a corresponding variability within the practices of surimono. Such variability, related to changes in the poetic base, is in fact precisely the foundation on which the history of surimono can be constructed.

Why then open with 1822? Why introduce surimono through a specific, historically limited version of its form, rather than through a generalization built of the range of its practice? Although one of the goals of this study is a comprehensive redefinition of the surimono genre, established precisely through the broadest possible vision of its background, emergence and subsequent development, nevertheless, I assert that the only way to understand surimono in depth at any given moment is in direct relation to its immediate historical and aesthetic context. There is no single surimono “narrative,” no definite relation between artists and writers, illustrations and poetry, commissioners and recipients, which holds true of all prints or of all periods. Indeed, one of the aims of this dissertation, in opposition to the many books that treat surimono as a single movement or artistic phenomenon, is to differentiate the various discrete stages and patterns of its development, as well as to demonstrate how and why surimono of nineteenth century Edo are substantially different from those made before or elsewhere in Japan. But if there is an overriding law regulating these changes in standards and relationships—including the rise of a unique nineteenth century type—that informs my treatment of surimono as poetry presentation sheets, it is that the shapes, tones and internal structure of surimono, “leaves of words,” stand as the material embodiment of the poetry they represent. For this reason, it is more fruitful to introduce surimono in detail, with particular illustrations standing in relation to

particular poems, and the form and uses of these works in relation to the poetic ideals of an exact historical moment, than to attempt to define surimono through a generalized, disembodied account of its history. I will have opportunity soon enough to open the lens wider and focus on the variety of poetry that appears on surimono, and the corresponding variety of surimono formats and contents. But for the moment, in order to further clarify the dependence of surimono on its immediate historical and aesthetic context, let's stay with these amateur poets at their surimono exchange for a little longer, though clarifying this now as but a particular moment in the history of genre, and by no means representing its nature as a whole.

Eighteen twenty-two, moreover, although any year in surimono history might have served equally well for this particular purpose, was not a random choice. For it was just around this time that the practice of surimono peaked in both quantity and quality, meaning aesthetic excellence in imagery, high demand for production, and internal complexity in text-image relations, making this version of surimono by far the best known in modern times. In fact, as we have seen, it was the circumstances and dynamics of the surimono exchange, based on the ideals of *haikaika*, that led to enhancements in all areas of surimono production. The two key components here were competition and the gift effect, which in combination led surimono's commissioners to virtually unchecked attempts to outshine one another in ostentation and novelty, in surface glitter, unusual subjects and styles, and depth of content—a rich, layered structure of internal connections and external references, with an expanding circle of astute, sometimes even obscure allusions. Such competition necessarily led to a building effect, wherein last year's surimono were no longer entirely sufficient for this year's efforts, but required additional supplementation or variation, while the status of surimono as a gift for another's sake put no limits on showiness. Previous explorations in surimono, however, were never entirely

abandoned, rather becoming the base on which ever more refined and polished productions could be built, taking the form progressively to higher levels. This 1809 surimono from the poetry group rivaling Magao's, the Gogawa (五側), for example, also takes the tea ceremony as its subject, with a collection of vessels too similar to Shinsai's to be merely coincidental (Figure 4).³⁴ But the 1822 work expands on this simple gathering of pieces by Gosei (五清), Shinsai's fellow disciple under Hokusai, with more sophisticated compositional and surface effects, as well as a more thorough integration of poetic devices and design. Although the 1809 work was a suitably refined work in its time, a little over a decade later its style was outmoded and no longer sufficient for the surimono exchanges in their advanced state.

The body of material utilized as references in surimono expanded in much the same manner, allowing for enhanced possibilities in structuring these works, which habitually linked present forms with ancient models, and even one classical paradigm to another. Certainly references to well known material such as the *Hyakunin issbu*, *Ise monogatari*, or *Genji monogatari* were the most likely to meet with widespread recognition, but the commissioners of surimono also delighted in showing off their learning by taking on less popular texts. Sometimes, this was a club phenomenon, with members reading an assigned text and creating pieces related to it. Various groups led by the Hakuraku Circle (伯楽連) decided to create a series of surimono based on the recently rediscovered *Torikaebaya monogatari* (とりかえばや物語・“Would That They Could Change”) in 1813, for example, taking on the yet more

³⁴ See Mirviss, Joan and John Carpenter, *Amerika no san josei ga atsumeta: Bunka Bunsei no kotodama no surimono* (alternate English title: *Jewels of Japanese Printmaking: Surimono of the Bunka-Bunsei Era 1804-1830*) (Ōta Museum of Art, 2000), no. 22. One could also add to the ‘building blocks’ of Shinsai's work a yet earlier Shunman surimono depicting a running horse on the side of a teacup. Suzuki Jūzō (1979), 565 (figure 12). introduces this work. Hokusai also employed an identical motif for the Sōma-ware print from his *Umazukushi* surimono series of 1822. See Daniel McKee, *Japanese Poetry Prints: Surimono from the Schoff Collection* (Ithaca: Johnson Museum of Art, 2006), 92.



Figure 4: *A Series of Various Arts for the Go Group* (五側諸芸つくし). A kokonotusgiri-ban surimono for a New Year, c.1811-13, with *kyōka* verses by Getsurokusai Yasumi, Chikushian Shichidomo and Chikuian, and illustration by Hōtei Gosei. [Image from Joan Mirviss with John Carpenter, *Jewels of Japanese Printmaking: Surimono of the Bunka-Bunsei Era 1804-1830*. Tokyo: Ōta Museum and Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 2000.]

obscure *Kamakura-shi* (鎌倉誌・“Chronicles of Kamakura”) the next year.³⁵

Another group based a surimono set on lexical items taken from an eighteenth century *kokugaku* (国学・native learning) study *Kogentei* (古言梯・“The Staircase of Words”), the author of which was the master of a famous *kyōka* poet and leading surimono designer.³⁶ In fact, as the surimono movement progressed, the pool of iconic references grew in conjunction with both the efforts of these groups and of individual commissioners, who reached out for novel material that would make their works different, standing out from those around them. The ostentatious intellectualism of surimono suggests that the mere display of wealth was not enough to portray one as a person of quality, but rather that some expression of internal depth was required as its complement. A rich merchant might still be despised as a social parasite without human feelings, according to Confucian thinking regarding this class, but a merchant that showed sensitivity and intelligence could no longer be pigeon-holed so easily in such a manner. In this respect too, it was less valuable to be straightforward and readily understood in one’s surimono than to confound the recipient with one’s extraordinary depths and unusual knowledge. One of the most notorious poets for his arcane allusions was Magao himself, who delighted in making surprising, sometimes even tenuous connections between elements that often had to be explained before the links could be understood. Although one could argue that this sort of approach does not make for good poetry—and indeed, by the standards of modern literary studies Magao has been almost universally dismissed as a poet—it did

³⁵ See John Carpenter, “Textures of the Antiquarian Imagination: Kubo Shunman and the *Kokugaku* Movement” in Amy Reigle Newland, ed, *The Commercial and Cultural Climate of Japanese Printmaking* (Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2004).

³⁶ The *kokugaku* scholar was Katori Nabiko 榎取魚彦 (1723-1782), a disciple of Kamo no Mabuchi. Nabiko’s own disciple, Kubo Shunman 窪俊満 (1757-1820), was one of the most prolific surimono designers, and ultimately created his own studio for surimono production. Some of the links between *kokugaku* scholars and their studies, and surimono commissioners and the content of their pieces will be explored in the fifth chapter of this dissertation.

make for intriguing content in the surimono exchanges, forcing recipients to puzzle out the nature of its content, and adding to their personal store of knowledge.³⁷

We can take a small taste of such obscurity, suggestive too of some of the variety even within *kyōka* surimono made in the same year, by sampling one of the poetry cards our pair of amateur poets might possibly have received at their 1822 gathering, with poetry by Tsuru no Hinako (鶴雛子)³⁸ and Magao, and a still life design by Hokusai (Figure 5). This print, which was commissioned by Hinako, who then hired Magao to add a celebratory poem, depicts a pair of extremely odd gifts, just opened—two dried beetles in a fancy lacquer box with a plum pattern, lid removed and a *furoshiki* wrapping cloth crumpled beneath, and a sea horse in a large, unfolded, gold-flecked sheet of decorative paper, with a design of cranes, clouds and pines on its exterior. Hinako’s poem, which utilizes another technique of courtly *waka* in borrowing liberally (*honkadori*) from Ki no Tomonori’s celebrated *tanka* in the *Hyakunin Isshu* (百人一首),³⁹ reads:

<i>Tamamushi no</i>	The jewel bug’s
<i>Hikari nodokeki</i>	Glow, peaceful
<i>Haru no hi wa</i>	On this spring day
<i>Kaiba mo isamu</i>	Even the sea horse frisky
<i>Nami no hatsuhana</i> ⁴⁰	A virgin flower on the waves

Magao’s verse, subtly repeating several of Hinako’s themes, reads:

³⁷ Curiously, the rise of the surimono genre itself will be seen in Chapter Three to occur in conjunction with another currently “dismissed” type of poetry, the city *haikai* style that rose after the death of Bashō, influenced by Takarai Kikaku and Mizuno Sentoku. One might thus be tempted to theorize that poetry of lesser aesthetic distinction required a “supplement” such as surimono in order to enrich it, whereas the poetry of an artist like Bashō was capable of standing alone. I will attack this argument in my conclusion, but in brief, I see that the very factors now critiqued in this poetry—its thick layers, allusive sophistication, and witty use of language—are what made it appropriate for surimono.

³⁸ Tsuru no Hinako also appears alone with Magao on a surimono from the *Genroku kasen kai awase* of the previous year (1821). The print is *Minasegai*, “the waterless shell.” See McKee (2006), 89.

³⁹ Number 33 of the *Hyakunin issyu*. ひさかたののどけき春の日にしづくころなく花の散るらむ. Bold letters in the following transcription represent the areas of direct borrowing: *Hisakata no hikari nodokeki haru no hi ni shizukokoro naku hana no chiruran*

⁴⁰ 玉むしの光のとけきはるの日は海馬もいさむ波の初花



Figure 5: *Sea Horses* (海馬) from the *Horse Series* (馬尽). A *shikishi-ban* surimono for the New Year of 1822, with *kyōka* verses by Tsuru Hinako and Utagaki Magao, and illustration by Katsushika Hokusai. [Image from Joan Mirviss with John Carpenter, *Jewels of Japanese Printmaking: Surimono of the Bunka-Bunsei Era 1804-1830*. Tokyo: Ōta Museum and Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 2000.]

*Aikei wo
Inoru tenpitsu
Wagōjin
Chifuku kaiba ya
Tamamushi motte*⁴¹

Pray for love and respect
With heavenly writing
To the God of Harmonious Unions
Carry earthly fortune
With a sea horse and jewel beetle

This surimono, despite its unusual subject, is in fact clearly a New Year's piece, with cranes and pines on the paper, a plum design on the lacquer box, and an allusion to the zodiac animal of the year with the sea horse. The print in fact is one of a series, entitled *Uma zukushi* (馬尽・“All About Horses”),⁴² of which thirty total designs are known, all of them for the New Year. But gifts of dead beetles and sea horses? What is going on here?

Having presumably presented a copy of their own work, and listened to Hinako's response, explaining any allusions or connections she may have missed, our poet-recipients would be on the hot seat as they received this surimono in return, having to look carefully now at the texts and images of the work and puzzle out this very question. A major hint was provided by the reference in Magao's poem to Wagōjin (和合神・“the God of Harmonious Unions”), a popular deity in the Tokugawa Period who was prayed to at wedding ceremonies for matrimonial bliss. In this context, the beetles make sense, as it was customary for brides to grind them into their face powder, this treasured insect being said to function as a wedding night aphrodisiac. Sea horses, though also believed to work as a sexual stimulant for men, were most often sold in pairs in paper packets like this one, to be held in the left hand during childbirth as a charm for safe delivery.⁴³ The combination, then, serves as a

⁴¹ 愛敬をいのる天筆和合神地福かい馬や玉むし持て

⁴² See Asano, “Surimono ‘Genroku kasen kai awase’ to ‘Umazukushi’ wo megutte” in *Nishike wo yomu* (Yamakawa Shuppansha, 2002) for a complete description of this series.

⁴³ The former belief likely derives from the alternate name of the sea horse, *tatsu no otoshigo* (“the bastard child of a dragon”), *otoshigo* referring to a child of a married man born by a woman other than his wife. The properties of the *tamamushi* likewise seem to be based on a magical reading of the name, with *tama* as “egg” (*tamago*). The latter belief seems a more literal reading of *otoshigo*, as a child born

wish for a healthy sexual life and fertility for a newly wed couple. This supposition is supported by the first poem, which sets up the beetle as a female symbol, the sea horse as male, suggested visually in their approximate likeness to genitalia. Hinako also uses the phrase *hatsu hana*, which signifies both the “first flower” of the year, and a young, virginal woman of marriageable age, while *nami no hatsu* and wordplay on *kaiha* and *kaiba* signifies rising waves (of passion). The very mention of spring, usually innocuous in *surimono*, thus here retains its implicit connotations of eroticism, and the “wavy” rumpled *furoshiki* in Hokusai’s image is typical of his idiosyncratic depiction of clothing used primarily in his “spring pictures” (春画 • *shunga*). In fact, Hokusai had just published in late 1821 a celebrated book of erotic scenes entitled *Manpuku wagōjin* (満福和合神 • “The Full Blessings of the God of Harmonious Unions”), which contains multiple examples of this technique.⁴⁴ The crumpled *furoshiki*, therefore, in and of itself, was pictorially an erotic reference, with the mention of *fuku* and *Wagōjin* in Magao’s poem completing the connection to Hokusai’s book.

There is yet another dimension hidden within Magao’s poem, however, with its mention of *tempitsu* (天筆) colorful streamers raised at the New Year in certain locales (contemporary Akita and Gifu, among others) which were inscribed with wishes, and later burned so that the prayers could reach the Gods.⁴⁵ The writing of these wishes, which constituted the *kakizome* (書初め) or auspicious first calligraphy of the New Year, always began with the set formula “*tempitsu wagōraku*

easily, and hence a safe delivery. *Otoshi* (“dropped”) can also be associated with the New Year, as *otoshi*, “the [new] year,” with *tama* (“jewel”) as its related word (*engo*).

⁴⁴ See David Pollack’s “*Manpuku Wagōjin*—The Gods of Myriad Conjugal Delights: An Illustrated Erotic Story by Katsushika Hokusai” in Carpenter, John (Ed.) *Hokusai and His Age* (Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2005), 270-297.

⁴⁵ This practice is a latter day version of the *kissho* (“fortunate writing”) tradition already mentioned, in which celebratory words (meaningless in content, but auspicious in aura) functioned as a formula to bring good fortune. The magical use of language to ritually influence reality can be seen in the concept of *kotodama*, or “word-spirits,” in which the use of words produces the emotion or reality it suggests.

chifuku enmanraku,” providing Magao with the parallel structure and wording of his verse—specifically the contrast of heaven and earth and the idiosyncratic sequence “*tempitsu wagōjin chifuku*”—just as Hinako’s poem had borrowed allusively from Ki no Tomonori’s famous *tanka*.⁴⁶ This allusion tied the surimono yet more concretely to New Year’s practices, and specifically to those of a local area, possibly Hinako’s place of origin, where the wishes this year might be for mutual loving respect for a newly wedded couple.⁴⁷ The true source of marital bliss, however, Magao, tongue in cheek, suggests, is in the acquisition of those “blessings of the earth” that appear in the image, aphrodisiacs. The commissioning of this particular surimono, therefore, almost certainly had an extra purpose, not only the decoration and distribution of Hinako’s poetry, but also the commemoration of an event in the poetic circle, specifically the marriage of one of its members. Magao, moreover, not coincidentally, had one of his strongest regional followings and many close personal ties in the Tōhoku area, where the unusual New Year’s rite that forms the basis of this work was carried out.⁴⁸ The recipient of the surimono would either have been cognizant of this regional custom, or have to have been taught it in order to understand the work, though external circumstances, specifically knowledge of the personal lives of fellow group members, would help point him or her in the right direction.

Surimono, as this example demonstrates, were often a complex mixture of personal and cultural allusions, referring both to the immediate reality of the givers and receivers, and to practices, beliefs and literary texts whose importance had been

⁴⁶ The “*tama*” (of “*tamamushi*”) that appears at the end of Magao’s poem was also in the closing formula of a *tempitsu*, while “*chifuku*,” “earthly blessings” was a phrase used in folk tales to refer to treasures, *takara*. *Takara*, another part of *tempitsu*’s auspicious closing formula, was seasonally appropriate for the New Year (linked to the Seven Gods of Good Fortune and the blessings of the coming year).

⁴⁷ Indeed, in the Gifu version of the *tempitsu* formula, one of the phrases was “*kanai chōkyū raku*” (“long-lasting happiness in the household”)

⁴⁸ See Asaoka, Shūichi, “Kaseiki no chihō kyōkakai—Magao to Shinano no musubitsuki wo chūshin ni” in *Kinsei Bungei* No. 36 (May, 1982), 37-52.

established in the broader realm of community. Unfortunately, as we know so little about most *kyōka* poets and the events of their lives, this personal element is often ignored in the analysis of individual surimono, for scholars can usually only surmise some of the private, inside references made to personalities, places of origin, and shared events that comprise part of the basis of these works.⁴⁹ Could our poets' tea ceremony surimono have been made in commemoration of an actual event they had hosted? Was one of their group's poetry meetings perhaps combined with a tea ceremony? Or might one of the poets have been a collector of, or dealer in rare tea implements? Although we cannot know the answers to these questions with certainty in most cases, it is appropriate to remain cognizant of the probable private references that shadow most works, and not ignore this dimension. Particularly in the many surimono that take specialized regional products or customs as their subjects, for example, we can suspect with some confidence that the reference has either some connection to the commissioning poets, or to a member of their group they are playfully honoring. Hinako's piece, with its jocular ribbing of a member from the Tōhoku region, recently married or engaged, is an excellent example of such a "surimono roast." In this respect, the generic distinction between kabuki surimono, made by poetic fan clubs to commemorate especially memorable performances, and surimono of festival floats, literary texts, local landscapes or suggestive still lives, may not be as great as it seems at first glance, the difference being only the public/private

⁴⁹ Many exceptions can be noted, however. John Carpenter describes a family-produced surimono depicting a mother breastfeeding (1995, 53-4), and Roger Keyes a portrait of a *kyōka* poet as a doll of a *gidayu* chanter in his article "'This is What We Accomplished': An Osaka Print Collector and his Circle" in Amy Reigle Newland (Ed.), *The Commercial and Cultural Climate of Japanese Printmaking* (Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2004), 28. Many other interpretations identify the subject of a print as being most likely a poet, but are often unable to name the figure as poets of the time would easily have done. Among the notable exceptions is an unusual cross-group series of six surimono made on the Shutendōji tale, where the *kyōka* poets are identified by the symbols of the groups they lead—see Bowie (1979), 75-81 for four prints of the set, Paul Schweitzer presenting the fifth piece in *Andon* 26, and J.H. Goslings positing the identities of the poets and extent of the set in *Andon* 30, "Yamabushi Revisited," then the sixth and final surimono with Magao as subject in *Andon* 54's "Yamabushi Reunited.")

nature of the temporal reference. For such works as the latter may also have been made in commemoration of particular events, participation in a shrine festival or reading group, a memorable trip, first meeting, friendship or personal hobby. One famous poet and designer, for example, produced such a poetry print to celebrate his Ise pilgrimage to visit *kokugaku* scholar Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730-1801), while another surimono was likely made to memorialize Magao's 1828 trip to Kyōto to receive an honorary court title.⁵⁰ These references were rarely explicit, but required the recipients' knowledge of external events for the connection to be made.⁵¹

The personal element in many surimono, often making these works difficult to decipher fully, was rarely the complete or even main body of the content though, as surimono also had functions outside of the closed circle of the exchanges, to proselytize more broadly the merits of a poetry group, as well as its individual members. The numbers of surimono, as well as the locations of poets, scattered throughout the provinces, suggest that many copies must have been mailed to recipients, rather than exchanged in person, as indeed was the practice for most surimono before the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the personal component of surimono, with its “inside” references, suggests a group of tightly knit commissioners and recipients, as well as the deeply social nature of this form. Indeed, in line with my identification of surimono as “poetic presentation sheets,” we must examine the poetry on them in relation to the traditions of presentation verse (詠進の歌 • *eishin no uta*),

⁵⁰ For the first story, see Tanaka Tatsuya “Kubo Shunman no kenkyū” in *Ukiyo-e Geijutsu* no.107 (Nihon ukiyo-e kyōkai, 1993, 28, figure 35). The print, incidentally, had an introductory text by Magao himself. For the surimono related to Magao's Kyōto excursion, see Roger Keyes (1985), 126. Some information on this ceremony and its aftermath is given in “Yadoya Meshimori kara mita Kaseiki no kyōkakai” in Asano Shūgō (Ed.) *Suijintachi no okurimono: Edo no surimono*, (Chiba Museum of Art, 1997) 24.

⁵¹ In this area, surimono bear a close relation to that aspect of *haikai* poetry identified by twentieth century *haikai* scholars as the *aisatsu* (挨拶 • “greeting”). *Aisatsu*, not always readily distinguishable from “pure” poetry, were verses with social/communal functions, to welcome, thank, or say farewell, to memorialize a person or event, or to wish well to another person. The content is particularized and sometimes quasi-allegorical, referring to a person as a natural form, or using a natural form related with a person through physical proximity, as in the objects surrounding his home.

and particularly, in the context of the New Year, of congratulatory poetry (賀歌・*ga no uta*). We touch here on the social functions of literature, one of the most neglected aspects of the traditional uses of the written arts in modern literary studies. Defining the successful use of literature as one that reflects a unique, unified and authentic individual interiority, in a thoughtful relationship to the commonly shared experiences of human life, the construction of literature in modern times has tended to downplay, ignore or reject outright forms such as congratulatory verse, communal compositions or light poetry. For congratulatory verse reflects less an individual mind in personal (and hence, in modern thought, “authentic”) engagement with the world than the social demands of kindness and expression of regard for another, as well as the demands of political rituals. It is a form driven less by true, spontaneous feeling than by the obligations of an external event, such as the “birthday” of the New Year (particularly in ten year increments from age forty). *Gesaku* (戯作・”playful work”) forms like *kyōka*, meanwhile, assert a shifting, non-literal reality, a subject formed in language that refers only obliquely, not directly, to the world, as well as an authorial identity that is blatantly unstable and non-serious, as seen most clearly in punning, self-deprecating *kyōka* pen names, which have sometimes been interpreted too literally as a lack of engagement.⁵²

The result of these attitudes has been a hierarchy of forms, in which, for example, the poems of the sixteenth part of the *Kokinshū*, “Laments” (哀傷歌), have typically received more academic interest and literary attention than those of part

⁵² One of ironies of *gesaku* studies until recent years is its tendency to portray its authors as not seriously engaged, since they chose comedy as their medium and intentionally downplayed their own authorial identity—see, for example, Donald Keene’s classic study of Edo literature *World Within Walls: Japanese Literature of the Early Modern Era (1600-1867)* (New York: Grove Press, 1976) 396-435, especially 400-401 for Keene’s dismissal of the “frivolity” and “lack of intellectual content” in *gesaku* works. In fact, it is hard to find eighteenth century literary works more politically engaged than those of Hiraga Gennai or Santō Kyōden, for example, whatever their elements of intentional silliness and wild fantasy, while the *kyōka* of Ōta Nampo were driven by a determined vision and attitude toward redefining the contemporary world.

seven, “Felicitations” (賀歌).⁵³ One could certainly make a strong argument that this relegation of resources is entirely appropriate, for the expression of feeling on the death of a significant other has much more emotive resonance and a far deeper connection to the experiences of the modern reader than the formulaic wishes for the long life of a now long-dead political figure. Presentation verses, likewise, such as the poetry card the surimono artist Shunman gave to Motoori Norinaga at their meeting mentioned above, have less to do with the universal human experience than with the circumstances of presentation, the place, time, season and most of all the person to whom the piece is dedicated.⁵⁴ The presentation, in fact, if it is personal, and not to a shrine, court or other public institution, is by its very nature not for us, but for the recipient. We may be generally familiar with the feeling of warmth for another that inspired it, but not the specific experience of the moment or the individual. If we can enjoy such works, it is only vicariously, with additional knowledge to help us to better imagine the situation. Moreover, the language of congratulatory or presentation verses is circumscribed and determined by the nature of this poetry as gift, for the sake of another. The poet is concerned more with auspiciousness and felicity, producing good feelings in the other, than with any honest expression of his or her own deeper emotions, thus giving a certain impression of superficiality and falseness. The subjects and diction of surimono, for example, like those of New Year’s congratulatory poetry, are relentlessly bright and cheery, optimistic at times to the

⁵³ One notable exception is Yagi Ichio’s *Girei waka no kenkyū* (Kyōto Women’s University Press, 1999), which focuses exclusively on ceremonial poetry, composed for official (*hare*) occasions. Such focus contrasts with attempts in modern literary studies to identify individuality and privately motivated authorial consciousness in *waka*. See, for example, McCullough (1985), Chapter Six: “Individual Voice.”

⁵⁴ See Tanaka (1993), 28, for records of Shunman’s 13/11/1796 visit to Norinaga. The social dimensions of *haikai* verse, which have a distinct relation to practices like surimono, have received more attention in recent decades, particularly on the question of *aisatsu* or “greeting verses,” which often appear seamlessly within *haikai no renga* sequences, but contain information immediately relevant to the private situation of the host of the session, his residence and its surroundings. As we will see, the practice of surimono developed directly from celebratory linked verse made for the New Year, and later distributed as a seasonal gift.

point of triteness, with words and images of good fortune endlessly recycled, wishes for long life patently untrue in their exaggerations. These are not the only grounds on which an examination of surimono poetry has been rejected for an exclusive focus on its pictorial subjects, but the general lack of modern interest in the social uses of literature has been part of the continued emphasis on images over words in the treatment of these pieces.

Two factors are at stake here in relation to the personal elements in Hinako's surimono. First is the precise nature of surimono as a gift, and second, leading into the main body of this dissertation, the larger definition of the surimono form in relation to the disciplinary categories of art and literature. Let me first close my discussion on the nature of surimono in its 1822 version by following the implications of these works as gifts. At their most basic level, surimono functioned as all gifts do. They were a sacrifice, on the part of the giver, which expressed appreciation, admiration, and/or mutual understanding to the receiver. The willingness to spend one's time, energy and material wealth in the creation of a gift for another's enjoyment sent an implicit message about one's feelings toward the other, creating some obligation for a return of the same. This concept of sacrifice itself mediated the more self-centered aspects of posturing involved in a surimono's formation, by asserting that the ostentatious display of wealth or knowledge was all for the pleasure of the other. But surimono were much more than generic gifts. As a privately designed work, a surimono's true gift aspect—its message as a gift—was in its content. This message was embedded in a special language, a code borrowed from literature, history and legend and canonized as cultural memory, which had been further elaborated precisely through these active exchanges, which implicitly posited giver and receiver as like-minded, advanced devotees of the same movement. One could certainly enjoy the beautiful, soft paper and colors of a surimono image, turning it in the light to catch the

gleam of silver and gold, physical form alone making it sufficient as a gift. But when one read the poetry, puzzled over its allusions and associations, and connected them with the image, a marvelous moment of insight could occur. In this flash, the instant of understanding, the result was a union of minds, a perfect alignment between the intentions of the giver and the reception of the receiver that posited their deep bonds as like-minded human beings. The underlying message of such surimono can thus be translated as “we understand one another, don’t we? On a high plane of sophistication, which few can reach, you and I are of the same mind.” It is in part to attain this particular type of intimacy that layered, complex content came to take precedence over merely ornate surfaces as a sign of a surimono’s excellence, with a certain degree of decoration becoming uniformly standard, even as the signifying links continued to deepen in intricacy.

Within this context of implied mutual understanding, moreover, the private language of surimono could take on political implications, with displays of courtliness and wealth signifying in and of themselves resistance to the Tokugawa order. Surimono were not only a recasting of the present reality, through the projection of past forms over them, but also a wish and prayer for the future. In this respect, the fact most surimono were made for the New Year, the occasion for the surimono exchanges of the nineteenth century, is significant. For New Year’s Day, cosmologically marking a complete break with everything that has come before it, offers the potential to imagine an entirely different future. The auspicious symbols on surimono, those of strength and perseverance (pine and bamboo) long life (crane and tortoise) good living (fine food, drink and clothing) and wealth (jewels, money, precious metals), were of course hopes for the coming year, but more than vague wishes, the tantalizing imagination, in the fresh, hopeful air of the new, of what might lie ahead in a differently arranged social scheme. Moreover, in the air of fantasy that infused the

surimono exchanges, still lives in particular, with their images of rare, imported, deluxe or antique objects, functioned not only as literal but symbolic gifts, the message of which might be paraphrased as “I would give you these if I could.” In this sense, surimono can be seen to constitute a kind of private currency, promissory notes for an imagined future at the hands of its participants, when the exchange of such gifts might actually become possible. For the present day of surimono make-believe, however, they remain merely “virtual,” the pretend play of being an aristocrat with unlimited resources, able to distribute actual treasures at the New Year, rather than simply printed images of them. Within this private realm of play, however, with the projection of the idealized past shadowing these flat forms with a third dimension of meaning, the participants of the surimono exchange could at least savor the significance of the objects summoned up by these paper gifts, and receive them with the warmth of their givers’ intentions, allowing for the creative redefinition of everyone involved in the exchange.

The nature of surimono as gift, therefore, helps to determine the standards for its content. To be proper gifts, our amateur poets’ surimono, and those that they received in return, had to be works with not only a well-worked out, layered and detailed surface, suggesting respect and willingness to sacrifice for the other, but a corresponding internal complexity as well, implying shared references and personal closeness. These elaborate interconnections between poetry and image, and moreover between the thematic elements of each form of signification, undermine surimono’s most common definition as “greeting cards,” demanding a more rigorous sort of description of their nature as gifts. Although the images of surimono are in fact irrepressibly “pleasant,” and its poetry can be described as “occasional,” these works present far more than the gestures of emotion that are greeting cards, the investment of wealth required much greater than the glitter of a Christmas card, and wit much more

deeply involved than the birthday card joke.⁵⁵ And though our poets did present their surimono as seasonal gifts to celebrate the New Year, receiving similar works in kind from their acquaintances, the exchange was expected, even for some obligatory, so if “greeting card” was their function, the events based on them would have been entirely rote. Rather, as documentary illustrations from early nineteenth century books make evident, the exchange of surimono was carried out as a playful competition, in which the presentation of a work was followed by a lively discussion of its contents, with recipients puzzling out the manifold connections and meanings developed within it. This sort of exchange emphasizes surimono as something closer to a riddle, created by the giver for the pleasure of the receiver, the resolution of which meant the achievement of oneness of mind. The dynamics of the exchange, meanwhile, with surimono posited as a gift for the recipient, allowed these pieces to become a competitive site for the display of wealth, knowledge and taste, a virtual pot-latch in which the giver was freed from the taboo of appearing self-centered and showy by identifying everything put into the print as existing for the sake of the recipient. It was such giving competitions that helped take surimono to its apex of aesthetic excellence and internal complexity in the nineteenth century, spurred by the playful nature of its poetry, which similarly delighted in exploiting the multivalent qualities of language, and connecting present day actions to the forms of the deep past.

⁵⁵ These are subtleties lost on the Hallmark Corporation, for example, who has actually made promotional efforts to claim surimono as early examples of greeting cards. See Nishiyama Matsunosuke, “Edo bunka genshō to shite no surimono” in *Hizō ukiyo-e taikan Berurin tōyōbijutsukan* (Kodansha, 1991), 375-376. As I will describe in Chapter One, there were other motivations than commercial for defining surimono as greeting cards, however, and in fact the majority of early (pre-Pacific War) commentators operated under some version of this definition.

Redefining Surimono

If these paper gifts, with beautiful, felicitous images and poetic inscriptions, presented on special occasions for another's delight, are not adequately defined as "greeting cards," how then are we to understand them? This dissertation makes a claim starkly at odds with conventional treatments of surimono, that nevertheless should seem obvious in the emphasis made here: rather than chasing superficial comparisons to Western social forms as the basis for description, we need merely look at the traditions of poetry presentation in Japan, which will provide us with a fuller, more meaningful, detailed and satisfying structure for understanding surimono in their original context. This mode of understanding has been available, yet not pursued in surimono's modern reception for two reasons: the desire, in part commercially motivated, to define surimono as a form of visual art, which according to the recipients' (often collectors and dealers) own limited definition, had to explain away or ignore surimono's poetic component; and secondarily the "weakness" found in the poetry on surimono, as evaluated by modern literary standards, when it was eventually read, making poetry inadequate as the central, defining trait of the form. These are, of course, modern negotiations, carried out in the hegemonic space of colonizing Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, at a time when "Japanese art" was identified as an important new cultural site, and its content defined not by the prevailing understanding in Japan, but rather according to the tastes of its European "discoverers". This period also marks the first peak of surimono appreciation in modern art history, with dozens of accounts seeking to describe surimono and place it within the practices of Japanese printmaking as a form of artistic activity. Curiously, however, among all these European accounts of surimono, one is hard pressed to find any mention of poetry at all, and in the few cases where its role is mentioned—sometimes with an uncanny accuracy that reveals contemporary knowledge was

greater than that selectively presented—it is typically buried within a list of surimono’s many possible occasions for use as “festival cards,” and made dependent upon this function.

Meanwhile, European interest was countered in a primarily commercial manner from the Japanese end, not only with active sale of original works, but also with waves of surimono reproductions for the export market, each increasingly poor in quality. Seeking only to exploit foreign fascination for profit, these “facsimile” copies were more than willing to override the original nature of surimono, simplifying, reducing or eliminating poetry, special effects and certain subject matter, introducing designs that were never intended as surimono in their characteristic square format, to meet the interests of their market. We can clearly read from these choices, then, exactly what foreign purchasers desired in these acquisitions: a taste of ‘old Japan,’ with Chinese and kabuki theater themes eliminated, in an exotic art print, for which the inclusion of poetry added little (beyond the mystery of its text) or nothing.⁵⁶ This late nineteenth-early twentieth century scene is thus filled with ironies, circulating around the idea of ‘art’ as a vaunted cultural (and therefore economic) space, differently constructed on both sides of what was now a national divide. For even as the educated Japanese marveled, scoffed at and actively took advantage of the gross Western misunderstanding of Japanese prints as a high and most desirable form of art, and surimono often in the highest place among them, they gladly helped the finest of these works to be transported to Western collections, much to the chagrin of later Japanese art critics.

As this latter transformation in the Japanese view suggests, the European construction of woodblock prints—mass produced commodities serving various

⁵⁶ Keyes (1985), 510 has actually done a comparative analysis of surimono subjects, showing that the copies match the collecting trends of European and American collectors, but not the distribution of subjects in original surimono.

functions in the Tokugawa Era—as art, with all of the assumptions and baggage this identification brought, was eventually accepted in Japan, as the very basis by which these prints could be given significance in an international context. The hegemony of the European point of view thus implies the importance of those late nineteenth century definitions of *surimono*, however misleading and inaccurate in emphasis they may have been, in setting the paradigms for the study of this form internationally, paradigms that remain remarkably active to this day. The danger of these paradigms is in removing *surimono* from their original, informing context, and resituating them in the modern understanding of art and the artist, with potentially disastrous results. Thus Alfred Marks, writing as late as the 1980s, could make so outlandish a statement as “[the] willingness [of *ukiyo-e* artists] to give *kyōka* poets equal space on their [surimono] prints shows that they felt them to be kindred spirits.”⁵⁷ This type of thinking, the absurdity of which should already be apparent in the historical context given to *surimono* here, in fact continues to structure exhibitions and studies of the genre, which are invariably arranged by artist rather than, for example, theme, date, poets or commissioning clubs, even in those more enlightened works that recognize the central importance of poetry. Such an emphasis is convenient for raising estimations of the form within the field of art history and among the general populace, for *surimono* illustrations were generally made by professional designers, the poetry by amateurs, and these images have an immediately broad appeal in their colors, lines and deluxe effects, whereas the poems are quite difficult to read and decipher without extensive training and explanation. But in historical terms, as well as for formal interpretation, there are simply no grounds for overlooking the poetry to concentrate solely on the artistic input. For in fact, as this dissertation will demonstrate by tracing

⁵⁷ Edith Polster and Alfred Marks, *Surimono: Prints By Elbow* (Washington D.C.: Lovejoy Press, 1980) vii

this form through its informing background, emergence and subsequent developments, surimono are poetic presentation sheets, which in illustration and physical form stand as material manifestations of the spirit, tone, approaches and devices of the poetry that appears on them, implying that the only accurate way to understand these works is through the poetry itself.

With this understanding of the dangers and limitations of the conventional approach to surimono in mind, I have devoted the first chapter of this dissertation to a close analysis of those initial writings that gave shape to it, examining their historical context and lasting effects. Outlining clearly the assumptions and patterns of thought established in relation to surimono by early writers, I then trace these through to the emergence of academic Japanese print (浮世絵・*ukiyo-e*) scholarship in postwar Japan, America and Europe, and on to the ‘second wave’ of surimono appreciation, which rose from the late 1970s based on a new approach that took the poetic aspect of these prints into account, though within the old structure of their identification as works of pictorial art designed by ‘special’ creative artists. The purpose of this initial chapter is to introduce the standard definitions and placements of surimono as a genre—typically as a subcategory of *ukiyo-e* prints as a type of art—in order to illuminate their limitations and blind spots, which continue to impoverish understanding of these works. We can become aware of these blind spots, first by examining the ideological context in which initial and subsequent placements of the surimono genre were made, second, by stepping out of the conventions of definition to view the form in a new manner, specifically stressing its basis in poetry, and third and most importantly, through a more objective view of surimono history, which does not limit the range of objects seen to merely those convenient for the placement of surimono as a form of visual art. This last approach means precisely going beyond the familiar kind of surimono I have presented thus far, to consider much earlier versions

of the form, including non-illustrated works and pieces based on very different kinds of poetry, and accordingly, illustrations and functions.

For in fact, although *kyōka*-based works such the one our poets gave away for the New Year of 1822 comprise the type by which the surimono genre as a whole is most broadly known today, so much so that the word surimono is almost exclusively associated with such pieces, in actuality *kyōka* pieces comprise only a minority within this form, created for a mere half-century within surimono's more than two hundred year history. Extant surimono based on *haikai* (俳諧) poetry, by contrast, date from as early as 1702 and as late as at least 1935, and were made steadily in-between, dominating in other parts of Japan and even commissioned continuously alongside *kyōka* works as they developed to take the leading place in Edo from 1785 to the mid-1830s. With the exception of those *haikai* surimono illustrated by artists of *ukiyo-e* lineages, however, these pieces have only drawn minimal attention from scholars outside of Japan, for most of whom the very definition of surimono as art practically demands that it be seen as a subcategory of *ukiyo-e* printmaking, with other works marginalized as minor experiments by amateurs. This identification of surimono as primarily a visual art, though convenient for authorizing the placement of the genre within the discipline of art history in the divisions of the modern academy, thus necessarily leads to a distorted perception of the form and its nature in its historical context. Late *haikai* surimono, illustrated by artists of the Maruyama-Shijō (円山四條) lines in the Kamigata region, for example, though known for over a century,⁵⁸ have historically been pushed to the periphery or rejected as aesthetically inferior, and

⁵⁸ Edward Strange, for example, introduces two *kamigata* surimono among 84 plates representing the full range of *ukiyo-e* in his often reprinted *Japanese Colour Prints* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1904) plates vii and xlv. Strange's comprehensive and representative historical approach was attacked by those who felt connoisseurship, the singling out of elite works of especially high aesthetic value (and the consequent necessity of ignoring/rejecting those not up to this standard), was required to separate the wheat from the chaff in Japanese prints. It is the connoisseurial (rather than objectively descriptive) view that dominates discourse on Japanese prints throughout most of the twentieth century.

hardly considered in relation to the genre of surimono as a whole—except perhaps (ironically, as the surimono genre itself emerged most immediately from seventeenth century *haikai* practices) as a minor spin-off.⁵⁹ Moreover, for this very same reason, attempts to bring the broader sweep of surimono history to public awareness in the last decade, through a major exhibition in Japan and the translation of its introductory essay to English,⁶⁰ have failed to produce any comprehensive redefinitions of the surimono genre, as any honest examination of them, I argue, *must*. The implications of surimono’s full history, thus, have not yet been explored, even in the landmark exhibition mentioned, which still treated surimono as a variety of visual art, in spite of its scope. This focus bracketed from consideration, for example, non-illustrated surimono, a substantial part of this genre, thus distorting full view of the form in order to cling to its definition as pictorial art.

The problem, however, is not simply ‘art,’ but rather excessive attachment to arbitrary disciplinary boundaries, which equally hamper those who would treat surimono as ‘literature.’ In Japan, in the last several decades, *haikai* surimono—

⁵⁹ Kurt Meissner does describe “Osaka surimono” in his *The Genre of Surimono* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles Tuttle Company, 1970), but only as a generalization to outline the characteristics of the *kyōka* version by contrast. Keyes (1985) is the most significant exception among *ukiyo-e* scholars, devoting a substantial section of his Beatty Library study to “Shijō Artists.” These surimono do not receive the same attention as *kyōka* works, however, their poems left untranslated and unexplained, although Keyes’ efforts to identify artists was a major advance in this field. Jack Hillier, who actually brought together the collection Keyes (1985) presented, also uses “Shijō surimono” in his *Uninhibited Brush* of 1974, though only as examples of particular artists’ styles. His study of the Mitchell Collection in the *Minneapolis Institute of Art Bulletin* (1978) provides a more direct focus, however, and was followed up by an article on “Shijō surimono” by William Hawkins in *Impressions* (1981). The only scholar outside of Japan to devote to these works the kind of sustained scholarly attention given to *ukiyo-e* is Louise Virgin, whose dissertation, centering around a Buson School surimono, has been a major influence on my point of view regarding surimono. In Japan itself, of course, the situation has been quite the opposite, with *haikai* works historically receiving most attention, albeit primarily from literature scholars, though *kyōka* and *haikai* works have both seen a spike in interest in recent decades.

⁶⁰ The exhibition was the 1997 *Suijin no okurimono: Edo no Surimono* held at the Chiba Museum of Art. The introductory essay, by Asano Shūgō, was considered significant enough to be translated into English by Tim Clark in *Impressions, The Journal of the Ukiyo-e Society of America*, No.20 (The Ukiyo-e Society of America, 1998), 17-37, an extremely unusual measure for a catalogue essay. No comprehensive redefinitions of surimono have been seen in the eight years since these events, however, for reasons to be explored.

renamed *haikai ichimaizuri* (俳諧一枚刷) to differentiate them from the “surimono” of art history—have become a major subject of interest, drawing primarily literary scholars to their study. The works of these scholars do not treat *kyōka* surimono at all, even as a reference point for contrast, instead focusing on *haikai*-inspired prints as though they existed in isolation.⁶¹ Thus, although they bring to the fore the poetic elements of surimono, with a primary concentration on poets rather than artists that is a refreshing antidote to surimono studies outside of Japan, these studies also fail to capture the full sweep and implications of the surimono movement, seeing it merely as one *haikai* practice among many, and not following its influence into the *kyōka* form. Moreover, in complete contrast to traditional European works, which bracketed, ignored or explained away the texts of surimono to see them as “pure art,” these literary studies tend to be somewhat less interested in imagery and the intimate relationship of the poetry of a surimono to its material form (format, layout, illustration) and function (processes of signification, political and social implications).

Meanwhile, *kyōka* surimono, relegated to *ukiyo-e* studies in Japan, have always taken a rather uneasy position there, not seen as unified in spirit, content or style with *ukiyo-e* as a whole, and with tricky texts that undermine their definition as art in the traditional structure imported from the West.⁶² In the analysis of *ukiyo-e* as a form of

⁶¹ The basis for this may in part be a reaction to the importance given to *kyōka* surimono in recent *ukiyo-e* studies, for *haikai* surimono in fact precede, outlast and surround *kyōka* surimono like an ocean around an island, being one of the bases on which the historically limited (but artistically refined) *kyōka* form was established. Another reason for the exclusive focus has to do with disciplinary boundaries, and the evaluation of *haikai* poetry as a more serious literary form than *kyōka*. Amazingly, *haikai ichimaizuri* studies also treat artists like Shunman and Hokusai, the main illustrators of *kyōka* surimono, while hardly ever referencing their *kyōka* productions, as though they existed in isolation.

⁶² *Ukiyo-e* studies in modern Japan have been founded, in fact, on a Western style approach, treating prints as works of art and print designers as artists, although historically the woodblock print is closer to a kind of media, with many other functions than decorative or aesthetic. This importation of the structures of Western art history gave the study of *ukiyo-e*, traditionally dismissed as unimportant works in Japan, an immediate foundation of significance, placing these prints as globally recognized artwork, and allowing for international unification in research. It also, however, significantly hampered the way in which *ukiyo-e* were seen, substituting a connoisseurial approach, which singled out fine “artistic” works while rejecting others from view, for historical objectivity.

art, surimono have always been regarded as secondary works, being clearly “occasional pieces,” motivated by events other than artistic vision/inspiration, and having a prominent function other than pure visual enjoyment. When treated at all in Japanese studies before the late 1970s, surimono (more easily dated than most turn-of-the-nineteenth-century prints) were used primarily as documentary materials, to trace changes in an artist’s signature, art name or style, quite in contrast with the importance attributed to them in late nineteenth century Europe, where surimono’s texts were more easily bracketed off and ignored. *Kyōka* surimono research in Japan has thus, until the last two decades, for lagged well behind Europe and America, and it was not until the breakthrough of interest outside of Japan that the first surimono exhibitions were held there.⁶³ In sum, studies of surimono have been partial and incomplete on both sides of the divide, which is one of disciplinary boundaries as much as it is of regional interests.

The present study attempts to remedy this situation, first, by drawing from studies of both *haikai ichimaizuri* and *kyōka* surimono to shape a comprehensive redefinition of surimono as a *form*, viewing its full, historical arc. To recast surimono as an independent form, not reliant on any particular genre of poetry or artistic approach, requires going beyond the scope of these conventional studies, to seek the broader bases of surimono in the ritual and social uses of poetry and its inscriptions, as they took shape in discrete practices in centuries even well before the emergence of these prints. In other words, by removing the disciplinary barriers that divide literature-based *haikai ichimaizuri* studies from art history-based *ukiyo-e* studies,

⁶³ The first notable exception is Suzuki Jūzō, whose “*Edo kyōka surimono no kaishaku to kansho*” of 1977 was a major breakthrough in recognizing the complex text-image interactions within *kyōka* surimono, and undoubtedly an influence on many of the important Western language works that followed, particularly from 1979-1985. Suzuki’s essay, presented at the first (and only) meeting of the International Surimono Society in Tōkyō (where Suzuki was, shockingly, the only Japanese participant) was reprinted in expanded form in his *Ehon to Ukiyo-e* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1979), 529-563.

allowing the largely discrete objects of their study to flow together and be examined as a single form, we can not only see the history of surimono in a fuller way, explaining characteristics poorly understood in isolation, but also perceive that surimono as a form is larger than any single poetic or artistic approach. When we seek the foundation of this form, we find, most surprisingly, that early surimono in particular have clear links in size, orientation, folds, layout and usage to calligraphic poetry presentation sheets, whose woodblock printed version they became. This understanding of surimono as a later day elaboration on the traditions of poetic presentation, as they had developed and evolved over centuries, then places the form in an entirely different context, demanding that we examine the social and ritual functions of poetry and its inscription in surimono as we would for formal presentation *kaishi* (懷紙), or later, the more informal *shikishi* (色紙). Surimono as a form, in other words, must be viewed not only in relation to its immediate circumstances of production, the *haikai* or *kyōka* groups and their allied artists, but also in light of the long traditions appropriated to give this form meaning, a historical foundation as their context for reception and interpretation. When we provide this context, we receive radically different impressions of the nature of surimono than we might by situating it as an art print, allowing us to understand the characteristics and content of the form in new ways, as well as to re-evaluate its circumstances of production and exchange and overall importance as a practice.

My second chapter, therefore, is focused on uncovering the informing precedents of surimono, primarily in the composition, inscription, ritual presentation and seasonal uses of poetry. After introducing some of the earliest extant surimono as samples of the form at its emergence, I attempt to trace both the general understanding of poetry as a social, ritual and seasonal practice informing these pieces, and the particular circumstances of surimono's historical emergence, demonstrating how the

surimono form grew out of specific seasonal practices of poetry inscription and presentation as employed in the seventeenth century. At stake here, first, is the establishment of the traditions that surimono drew from, in both its *haikai* and *kyōka* variants, appropriating forms with historically accumulated meaning and depth of resonance for their own unique purposes. The broad background given in this chapter is important not to assert the continuity of surimono within ‘native traditions,’ but rather to understand the semiotic role surimono played as a kind of fashion statement in the cosmopolitan early modern period. Specifically, analyzing both the historical background and cultural context of surimono allows us to see how, by summoning up and relying on structures built in the past through its format, content, uses and materials, surimono, even as a new form, could achieve distinction and significance—as well as the immediate need for such self-aggrandizing presentations in the contemporary scene. The structures that give surimono an impression of being elite, socially, ritually and culturally important, I argue, are all drawn pointedly from the past, be it references to court poetry and its practices of inscription and exchange, the auspicious power of words as presentation at certain key moments of the year or life cycles, or the giving of elegant, poetic gifts which posited giver and receiver as equally wise, powerful and adept figures, united in understanding. It is vital, however, even as we draw these connections between surimono and its historical precedents, not ourselves to fall under the spell of its arranged similarity, to remember, for example, that surimono are not hand-inscribed and personal, but rather woodblock printed and mass-produced presentations, that utilize various specialist skills, not just those of the commissioner seeking positive self-reflection.

In my broad-ranging analysis of surimono’s historical background, I begin with courtly poetry, its practices of inscription, and uses in relation to the festival calendar and interpersonal communications, in part to examine a different aspect of

the poetic tradition, not its personal and expressive but social and ritual functions.⁶⁴ The social nature of Japanese poetry is apparent in its use in communications, such as poetic letters, one of the traditional bases for surimono, but also in more formal and ritual uses of poetry in presentation sheets. In relation to one occasion of usage, I examine New Year practices at the Heian Court, particularly as they involved poetry and its presentation. Here I treat the development of spring imagery in *waka*, the uses of the New Year in literature, and the practices of congratulatory verse and formal presentations to the emperor, as well as New Year poetry parties and congratulatory letters. In this context, it is not only poetry itself, but also ritual actions at specific moments in the year and life cycles that determine the meaning of these events. Special attention is given to the practice of *kissho* (吉書), the mobilization of auspicious words in written form as a means of instituting a new reality, be it political or personal, typically created at the New Year and at key moments of change. *Kissho*, which as a practice survives in the *kakizome*, or first auspicious brush writing of the New Year, provides much insight into the ritual structure of surimono, and helps to explain much of its content—though again, whether this structure was taken seriously, or merely as a means to give depth to a new form requires skeptical examination. In connection with this point, I introduce theories on cyclical time to view New Year practices in the cosmological context that inspired them, material that allows us to examine surimono's social and ritual functions in light of a pre-modern worldview, and inquire if the practices of surimono are inspired internally or through superficial imitation.

⁶⁴ A parallel can be drawn between the 'artist-centered' approach to surimono and *ukiyo-e* and the poet-centered approach to *waka* in their false emphases on an individual, creative and personally expressive use of art, literary or visual, reflecting uniquely modern concerns, rather than taking into account the limited or directed nature of creativity in the original context of these forms.

This outline of surimono's general sources, which takes us from the variety of New Year's practices in the imperial court to the development of standard seasonal imagery for spring poetry, from poetic letters and inscriptions to formal presentation sheets and congratulatory poetry, comes to a head in an examination of the particular circumstances of surimono's early eighteenth century emergence. Here, the latter day seasonal practices of New Year poems, now in linked form (歳旦みつ物・*saitan mitsumono*), and their reproduction in hand-inscribed, then woodblock printed booklets (歳旦帖, also 歳旦帳・*saitanchō*), together with the standard format for formal poetic inscription and presentation (*kaishi*), combine to give birth to a new form, the single sheet *saitan* ("dawn of the year") surimono. Surimono at their origins, simply put, are *saitanchō* writ large, with the exact content of these booklets, but on grand paper with the size, quality, format and even, to some extent, layout of *kaishi* for linked verse (連歌・*renga*) presentation. This amalgamated form, once again, is both new and yet rooted in traditional poetic practices, certainly not an unbroken continuation of these traditions, but rather a unique, modern application of technology that utilizes traditional structures to give meaning to itself at its emergence. Ultimately, we can thus describe surimono as born as a modern-day version of the poetic presentation sheet, laden with history and cultural significance, taking its precise contours and materials from one of its late historical utilizations (*renga*-style *kaishi*), but applying to it a completely new kind of content (the *haikai* New Year album), as well as a different technology of production, which introduces entirely new possibilities and potentials to the form.

The third chapter focuses in closely on the development of these possibilities and potentials by examining the 75 pre-1736 surimono surviving in the library of Ōmura Rantai (大村蘭台), the *haikai*-practicing lord of Hizen (肥前). These extant pieces provide clear evidence to shore up the hypotheses of the previous chapter: that

surimono emerged purely as a *poetic practice*, not the primarily pictorial form it is often assumed to be, relying on earlier traditions of poetic composition and exchange for seasonal, personal and ritual purposes. While describing in detail the nature of these early, *haikai*-based surimono for the first time in any English language writing, I also anticipate surimono's future development by exploring the ramifications of the use of illustration on surimono, particularly the functional role that images play in giving form to single sheet poetry inscriptions as unified and ordered works, through the introduction of witty structural devices (趣向 • *shukō*). My approach to early surimono, only a fraction of which bore illustration, is thus structured in relation to what I see as its primary challenge: how to become more than just a page from a *saitanchō*, writ large in *kaishi* format, but an object more in keeping with the nature and ideals of its poetry. As I demonstrate in this chapter through close readings of individual pieces, there were multiple ways, not only through illustration, in which this task could be accomplished, but images provided a potential for reference to a virtually unlimited stock of ideas and structures that pre-existing organizations of language on its own could not match. Close examination of these early *haikai* works thus forces a radical re-assessment of the genre of surimono, revisions that must then be related to its later, more familiar forms. On the one hand we see that surimono emerged as a poetic genre, and that illustration was not originally primary to it, yet in surimono's development took on a functional role in advancing these works, while on the other, we see that large format surimono have a basis and particular use in the representation of poetry groups that must be taken into account even in their later uses for *kyōka*. Rather than seeing *haikai* and *kyōka* surimono as distinct movements, then, I posit that analysis of early (*haikai*) surimono demands re-evaluation and redefinition of the more familiar (*kyōka*) version of this form, taking into account the implied

seasonal, social and ritual functions of the genre as a poetry presentation sheet, not simply as the “art prints” of which it is conventionally assumed to consist.

Firm comprehension of the background, emergence and development of the surimono genre as a poetic presentation also guides and provides new insights for understanding the later shifts in surimono’s textual base, as the genre branched into *haikai*, *kyōka* and announcement pieces. While I dismiss the last as a purely social use of the surimono form, without meaningful resonance in the tradition of poetic presentations, the switch to *kyōka* as a poetic base remains firmly in the line of the poetic presentation, with important repercussions for how the form is made, seen and utilized. Although it is important to avoid some variation of the “fallacy of origins,” in which the way that a form emerged is assumed to be its basis throughout its historical development, for a form as precedent-oriented as the poetic presentation, the resonance of traditional uses can hardly be ignored. Thus I argue that even with the merging with *ukiyo-e* artists and themes, surimono maintains its unique identity as a seasonal poetic presentation, and that the content of these works must be examined in this light. Such context gives new significance, for example, to the structure of texts and images through the specifics of the poetic tradition, especially conventionally related concepts (*engo*), seasonal imagery (*kigo*) and well-known precedents as the basis for composition (*honkadōri*), as well as devices such as puns and bridge words (*kakekotoba*). In addition to poetic context, surimono must also be seen in the social and ritual contexts of presentations, with the auspicious nature of diction and imagery considered in this light, as symbolic gifts directed at others, with whom one wishes to deepen bonds. Moreover, surimono’s shift in poetic base was accompanied by eventual, stark changes in its material form and uses, from format and layout to style of imagery and text-image relationships, and even method of exchange. Here, again, we can clearly perceive through contrast how the nature of *haikai* poetry leads to a

certain style of inscription and representation, suited to its essence, while the material embodiment of *kyōka* gives birth to a very different form and structure. Examination of these differences, which transcend mere historical context, leads us to the realization that the basis of surimono is in its poetry, and that all of its other aspects develop in relation to this seed. My fourth chapter, therefore, begins with an analysis of *kyōka* poetry, particularly in its transplantation in Edo, then seeks to find the nature of this poetry in the forms that the *kyōka* surimono took as it developed.

In relation to this last point, awareness of the surimono tradition preceding its use for *kyōka* works radically revises contemporary understanding of the historical development of this form, which is still falsely tied to the private making of pictorial calendar prints (絵暦・*egoyomi*) from 1765. Although the importance of the privately made calendar print for the development of *kyōka* surimono should not be underestimated—particularly in regard to the commissioning of *ukiyo-e* artists, the heavy use of *mitate* (見立),⁶⁵ the in-person, competitive exchanges of these pieces, their small format, and their puzzle-like qualities of wit, with hidden references and symbols—private *egoyomi* in fact emerged from *haikai* practices, including surimono, as a pictorial version of Edoza *haikai* aesthetics, which had become aligned with *ukiyo-e*. But even acknowledging private *egoyomi* as a discrete practice, distinct from surimono, historical analysis of the development of *kyōka* surimono must, I argue, see early *haikai* surimono and private *egoyomi* as two streams feeding the development of this form. Initially, the two streams are separate, if parallel, with *kyōka* groups utilizing large, folded *renga-kaishi* style surimono to represent their membership and compositions at monthly meetings, exactly as in early, *haikai* surimono, while

⁶⁵ Literally “to see [one thing] standing [in the place of another],” *mitate* has been translated in numerous ways in English, from “analogue” and “comparison” to “parody” to “travesty,” the latter meanings more accurately covered by the term *yatsushi* (咄各). For a thorough discussion of *mitate* vs. *yatsushi*, see Timothy Clark’s “Mitate-e: Some Thoughts, and a Summary of Recent Writings” in *Impressions: The Journal of the Ukiyo-e Society of America*, No.19, 9-27.

individual poets appended their verses to their miniature New Year calendar designs for purposes of personal representation and display of wit. In the final years of the eighteenth century, however, several developments influenced this split use of *kyōka* on private publications, leading to a unified *kyōka* surimono. First, the balance between calendar marks wittily disguised in pictures or texts and image-related poetry began to shift, as the greater possibilities for creativity and sophistication through poetry took over for the calendar marks. By at least 1797, miniature calendar-like prints begin to be produced without calendar marks at all, as the clever relation between image and poem assumes sole position as the basis of the work. No longer connected to calendar prints and their conventional forms, these privately produced poetry prints also begin experiment with different formats, tall and narrow like *tanzaku* (短冊), square like *shikishi*, or rectangular like single verse *kaishi*. As groups begin to make these works together, unified concepts and series develop, at first untitled, but later with concepts directing composition. Series themes and new, medium-sized formats allow for various forms of compromise between the group basis of large, folded surimono and the individual basis of small, *egoyomi*-like surimono. These ultimately find their ideal form in the square *shikishi* surimono, with historical resonance suited to *kyōka*'s courtly emphasis and the colorful, gilt imagery of *ukiyo-e*, allowing for a meaningful combination of poetry and image, as well as for a balance between group and individual purposes in series. In sum, examining the development of the *kyōka* surimono—so long taken as the aesthetic epitome of this genre—through the lens of early surimono allows us to see the growth of the form and its challenges in an entirely new light.

My fifth and final chapter attempts to define the nature of mature *kyōka* surimono and its text-image interplay in relation to the poetry of its leading proponent, Shikatsube Utagaki Magao and the surimono exchanges that developed around him.

Here, I analyze the loose, associative play with aspects of cultural memory in Magao's poetry and find its parallel in the text-image play of surimono. By contrasting Magao's early poems, in the satirical Tenmei (天明) *kyōka* style, to his later *haikaika*, we can understand not only the transformation of the *kyōka* poetic ideal, but how this relates to surimono and its increasingly overt classicism. I examine examples of surimono with Magao poetry to show the intimate connection between his poetics and the developing form of *kyōka* surimono, both in its use of the idealized past to define the present, and in its structural complexity. I then relate Magao's poetic theories to those of Motoori Norinaga, particularly Norinaga's notes on poetry in his late *Uiyamabumi* (宇比山踏), written at just the time that Magao was rising to power in the *kyōka* world. Although I believe it is important to differentiate clearly the approaches of surimono and *kokugaku*, arguing that surimono cannot possibly be construed as a *kokugaku* movement, considering their heavy reliance on what *kokugaku* would characterize as "Chinese" materials, I describe their intimate relation in regard to the idealized past, and the value of classical texts and poetry in regaining it. This argument sets up a discussion of the dynamics of the surimono exchanges as a classical revivalist practice, an under-explored determining aspect of *kyōka* surimono, which takes on new meaning in relation to the structure Magao created for *kyōka*.

Ultimately, the aim of this dissertation is a comprehensive redefinition of the surimono genre as an early modern version of the historically rich poetic presentation, re-centering poetry as its main, determining element while undoing the conventional viewing perspective of these works as pictorial art. For images, even when professionals produce them, even when they take a commanding place on the print in size and color, nevertheless have only a secondary role to poetry in shaping the material content and functioning of a surimono. This role makes poetry the key not

only to interpreting individual works, but also the larger movements in the history of this form, including surimono's social and political implications. Following this hypothesis through to its various ramifications, this study covers two ends of the broad range of surimono creation—representing over a century of poetic activity and the traditional practices of nearly a millennium to which it self-consciously related—through a minute focus of the utilization of poetry on individual works, shaping their form, content and function. Combining synchronic and diachronic approaches in this manner, I aim not only at introducing new works and readings of those works in their immediate context, but also at building an entirely new history of the genre through their sequential arrangement. My goal for each type of surimono, therefore, is to describe both the general aesthetics and aims of a prevailing poetic approach, along with the specific application of those principles on samples of surimono, much as I have done by way of example with 1822 in this introduction, thus giving a history, through poetry, not only of particular monuments of the form, but also of its range and transformations over time, corresponding with changes in aesthetics. Concentrating on poetry, this is to say, is not only a means for exploring the inner construction of any given work, but also for understanding the external transformations in the surimono genre and its implications over time. With poetry in the center, therefore, we gain an entirely new view of this genre, its interest and importance, which defines surimono as a different type of artwork, a casting of poetic ideas, devices and ideals in a material form.

Chapter One:

Surimono as a Genre: The Paradigms of Modern Definition

Nothing brings the arbitrariness of words and the realities they shape so clearly to consciousness as the attempt to define a genre. We typically pass through life believing in discourses as reflecting certain and substantial realities, hardly questioning the relationship between language and the forms of the world it is supposed to ‘re-present.’ But when we attempt to map out distinctly the boundaries of a genre—be it surimono, still life painting or comic poetry, to give three relevant examples—that we had once assumed to be discrete, we are faced with a mass of only partially differentiated forms that frustrate our desire for clarity, and internal contradictions that deny any hope for more than a grossly generalized unity. Those acquainted with them can identify a surimono, in most cases, at a glance, so absolute definition seems almost unnecessary. Yet when we try to make our common sense knowledge precise, to define the first instances and outlines of a genre, the object eludes us, slipping into the half-forms of prenatal development and early stages of growth, let alone the sheer variety of individual types. We know that a tree begins as a seed, sprouts, branches, toughens into a sapling, then enlarges into a mature tree as we know it, but at just what point can we identify it as a tree, and not merely an early, related growth? Or should we call a seed or sprout a tree, nascent or in potential—or simply the thing itself? Moreover, on just what grounds can we clump together the diversity of specific cases—pines, plums and willows, to name a few pertinent to the present subject—under the general category ‘tree?’ And what of shrubs, bushes and bamboo? Although criteria for classification may strive to present convincing rationale, answers are nonetheless ultimately arbitrary, dependent upon the mode of

definition that comes from the viewer and way of viewing, rather than purely from any given or innate categorization within the substance of the material itself.⁶⁶

In structuring my argument, I thought it common sense, before attempting an account of the emergence and growth of surimono, to define with utmost clarity exactly what “surimono” means, in order that historical instances of the form can be identified and distinguished from other, perhaps related, forms. But, of course, as forms do not have neat, Platonic models outside of their particular material/temporal manifestations, the only way to define one is first to examine its historical instances, leading us in circles. Working through examination of historical detail, we can say that something about a particular type of piece seems to differentiate it from some and link it to others, and then attempt to delineate the specifics of that difference, as a traditional carver would work out the pattern in jade, until its ‘inner shape’ became clear.⁶⁷ But where we find these lines of differentiation, and distinguish between their multiple types, is ultimately not up to the grain in the pattern of the world, but to the expectations of our eyes and structured ways of seeing.⁶⁸ We are, for instance—if we

⁶⁶ Robert Stam, for example, in his *Introduction to Film Theory* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), eloquently considers the problems of genre on these and other terms: “A number of perennial doubts plague genre theory. Are genres really ‘out there’ in the world, or are they merely the constructions of analysts? Is there a finite taxonomy of genres or are they in principle infinite? Are genres timeless essences, or ephemeral, time-bound entities? Are genres culture-bound or transcultural?”

⁶⁷ “Order is, at one and the same time, that which is *given in things* as their inner law, the hidden network that determines the way they confront one another, and also that which *has no existence except in the grid...*” Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Random House, 1970, xx)

⁶⁸ Of course, although many genre definitions tend to be retrospective and anachronistic, applying a contemporary view of the world embodied in contemporary discourse to objects from the past, the terms and labels they employ often derive from historical usage and gain a veneer of credence thereby. We know that the surimono exists as a discrete object type because it was treated as such from the eighteenth century on, with a specific label that applied to it and it alone. Yet what is ‘it?’ Analysis of historical uses of the term will reveal that the content of ‘surimono’ shifted in relation to the specific practices and needs of particular places and periods, some as short as a quarter-century. Excavating the historical uses of the term ‘surimono’ is vitally important, and will be taken as this chapter’s initial task, in order to reveal how the genre definition operated within a given time and setting, and within an individual person’s own perspective. Yet for the very reason of their specificity, these historical uses cannot be taken as absolute, or any more valid as an overarching definition than the contemporary view. In fact, the contemporary view, able to cut across place and time in seeking such an overarching definition, actually has distinct advantages in breadth of perspective that place it above the ensconced

can creatively free ourselves from the inertia of the organizing logic we are born into—able to shift between multiple levels of differentiation, to see the same object in various ways. Focusing on surimono as an elite branch of *ukiyo-e* printmaking aimed at wealthy, educated consumers, the genre could be linked directly to *limited edition*, *deluxe-printed works* of the eighteenth century.⁶⁹ On the other hand, if one asserts that a surimono is *any work privately designed and printed* for a particular purpose, the genre would include fliers, advertisements, calendars and pilgrim labels (引札).⁷⁰ Or again, seeing surimono as *poetic greetings in refined calligraphy on rich paper*, we could locate their informing origins as far back as the practices of the Heian court. None of these patterns is at odds with material data, but the emphasis of one over the other will have deep repercussions for the manner in which we view the form, and connect or differentiate it from related forms. Is surimono primarily a poetry sheet, a

view of historical practitioners, who typically knew only their immediate circumstances. The historical genre definition, therefore, although key to understanding how a work was distinguished and defined in its own day, cannot stand as absolute, in place of the broad, contextual overview that only the retrospective glance can provide.

⁶⁹ This view of surimono as a privately funded, deluxe version of the *ukiyo-e* print remains fairly dominant in general art history (and *ukiyo-e* studies as its specific subdivision), as seen for example in the opening of Satō Mitsunobu's "Kyōka surimono-kō: Edo bunjin no asobi" in *Surimono: Privately Published Prints from the Spencer Museum of Art* (Tokyo: Riccar Museum of Art, 1991), 10. Although this method of definition is not without some basis, assuming *ukiyo-e* loosely defined, to stop with the deluxe nature of surimono prints fails to ask *why* they were so richly made, according to what traditionally established structure and for what socially defined purpose—although it allows precisely the pictorial nature of surimono, so essential to its definition as art print, to come to the fore. Still more critically, to identify surimono as simply an *ukiyo-e* print that employs rich materials, special printing and careful design is to miss the contexts of poetic tradition and contemporary practice that inform the content of these works, pictorially as well as linguistically. This influence is apparent even in those kabuki and beauty portraits that reveal direct links with *ukiyo-e*—not to mention the many works that stray from *ukiyo-e* style and subject matter entirely. In fact, I will argue that *ukiyo-e* should be seen as but one of the many artistic strands that fed surimono—surimono as a separate form, distinct from exclusive identification with *ukiyo-e* or any artistic or poetic practice in particular.

⁷⁰ For example, the surimono entry in *Edo-Tōkyōgaku jiten* (Sanshōdō, 1987, 652-3) by Yoshihara Kenichirō takes this point of view: "a surimono is something designed, printed and distributed for a particular purpose, with a select group of recipients in mind." This undistinguishing view of surimono as "something printed," not a distinct genre per se, is also the perspective informing contemporary Japanese studies of 'haikai ichimaizuri,' which sifts out from its mass single sheet prints with *haikai* poetry as its object of study. *Ukiyo-e* studies, by contrast, subordinate surimono not to poetry but to woodblock print art, finding the presence of an image essential to the identity of a surimono. Among definitions of surimono in modern Japanese dictionaries and encyclopedias, in fact, there is little exact agreement beyond the most general terms of usage.

private publication, or a deluxe print? Each view will include and exclude certain pieces from consideration, and link surimono with radically different sources and meanings. So too will any further division of surimono by type—as they have been categorized in *ukiyo-e* studies according to the pictorial themes familiar from commercial prints and modern categorizations of paintings: still lifes, kabuki drama, portraits of beauties, landscapes, and legendary scenes.⁷¹ Though these allow for more precise characterizations of aspects of the genre—should we decide to identify all of these as equal parts of the same genre at all—they also centralize and marginalize particular works and ways of seeing, obscuring some of the other ways we could view the form (by poetry type, for example, or a categorization of particular text-image relationships).

If I choose here to emphasize surimono's close links with and purposeful utilization of the tradition-oriented way of Japanese court poetry, it is not because I believe the connections with deluxe/limited edition or private printmaking do not exist. Rather, it is that these links with poetry form a more deep reaching and fruitful line, allowing for the inclusion of practices and pieces that help us to place the surimono genre in a remarkably clear line of development, to perceive its distinct characteristics and uses against an extensive historical backdrop, and so to differentiate it from superficially related print forms that do not share its informing context and motivations.⁷² And I will call the history of the genre based on this

⁷¹ For example, *surimono* with kabuki themes, produced by members of fan clubs who dabbled in poetry, could be meaningfully distinguished from surimono made by clubs whose primary purpose was poetry, not the living subjects of their prints. Such a distinction would be particularly helpful in Osaka, where fan clubs commissioned deluxe prints of favorite actors, often with poetry, but typically in a commercial format (*ōban*, not *shikishi*). In this dissertation, however, I will not distinguish kabuki surimono from other types, for its poetic ideals, past-present linkage, and text-image games are no different, even if its range of modern subject matter is limited to the stage, its events and performers.

⁷² Starting with poetic practices, for example, will allow us to meaningfully incorporate and understand both the deluxe and private-printed nature of surimono, in a way that neither of these other definitions as surimono's main attribute could. A work need not include poetry or be privately printed to be deluxe, for example, while privately printed works cover a broader range than poetic and/or deluxe

definition ‘revisionist,’ as though it were the history, and not the object of analysis itself that has been revised. Although I continue to believe that I am revealing some truth about my object that others have overlooked or forgotten, it is in fact the choices of genre definition made in this initial chapter that will give the history of the remainder its unique shape. By defining surimono as a poetry presentation sheet, in other words, I have given this genre a different context, and so forced its examination in the history of material practices for the inscription of poetry, the development of the nature of that poetry as relevant to surimono, and the practices of poets that motivated the birth of the form, finding connections that shed surprising new light on this genre. But to be fair, I must admit that this opening is in actuality already a conclusion, that my definition of surimono derives from a particular understanding of its history and development, highlighting certain links and patterns that have led me to certain conclusions about the nature of the form. There is nothing particularly shameful about this process, however: it is the messy manner in which all genre definitions and conclusions proceed, oscillating between historical detail and the descriptive abstractions that highlight certain details above others. But we should be aware of the choices made in the making of genre definitions and the consequent arbitrariness of the conclusions that follow from them, remaining open to multiple possibilities of interpretation—even when that may risk the very concreteness of the object we aim to establish.

My challenge to traditional assumptions about surimono, then, derives from a simple shift of focus, from the pictorial to the literary dimensions of these pieces. Specifically, whereas typical modern descriptions of surimono have begun with *ukiyo-e* illustrated *kyōka* pieces, and then attempted to trace the origins of this form, usually

works. But defining surimono as a poetic presentation sheet necessarily makes deluxe materials and private printing essential to the form, for historically defined reasons to be seen.

ending with the *egoyomi* calendar print parties of 1765-66,⁷³ I will begin with the *haikai* surimono, illustrated or not, that were produced from the first years of the eighteenth century, outlining this genre against its informing context in poetic traditions, then apply this new understanding of context to nineteenth century *kyōka* surimono. The result is a view that finds poetry and poetic practices as fundamental to the birth, nature and development of surimono, and therefore marginalizes certain later forms, such as non-poetic announcement pieces, as not completely aligned with surimono's original intent, while raising yet other neglected practices, such as thematic poetry competitions, as central to the form. A view with a less chronological, developmental emphasis than mine might simply find announcement and poetic presentation surimono as two equally valid versions of the form.⁷⁴ If I argue that my analysis is correct, it is only so from the point of view I have taken, emphasizing sequential stages of growth, rather than an overview of extant works in surimono formats as an undifferentiated unity, as they have been typically received and treated in modern times. And even with such a preconceived (if retrospective) view of what constitutes surimono, I will still have difficulties differentiating this genre from some of its closely related forms, such as early *saitanchō* (歳旦帖, also 歳旦帳)—booklets of collected New Year *hokku* (発句・"opening verses," in modern times called

⁷³ The earliest account I have found that traces the origins of surimono directly to the Meiwa calendar print exchanges is the 1889 preface Hayashi Tadamasa wrote for his surimono albums, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. See a pictorial reproduction of this preface in Joan Mirviss, "Jewels of *Ukiyo-e*: Hayashi's *Spring Rain Collection of Surimono Albums*" in *Oriental Art* (Feb. 1989), 28. Earlier Japanese accounts did make implicit comparisons of surimono and *egoyomi*, but never directly attributed the *origins* of surimono to *egoyomi*. Starting with *egoyomi* in this manner eliminates poetry from consideration as a motivating force in the origins of surimono, while explaining the richness of paper and printing according to the status of the Meiwa calendar print commissioners. In fact, however, the 1765-66 calendar print exchanges were organized by poetry clubs, who drew from the earlier traditions of private printing in surimono to make pictorial equivalents of witty Edo *haikai* verse.

⁷⁴ In fact, I should emphasize that the assumption that the surimono genre is comprised of both poetry and announcement or invitation pieces (often without poetry) is ubiquitous. My view that privately commissioned announcement and invitation cards without poetry should be considered only as an offshoot, and not as part of the main trunk of the original surimono form, runs counter to standard descriptions. My view is based, however, as I will show, on strong historical and material evidence of what surimono were at their origins.

“haiku” 俳句) sent as gifts, and thus the pre-cursors of surimono—and later, *haikai*-inspired picture calendars, which lack actual poems but are full of the spirit, style and approaches of this poetic mode, and which also had a profound formative influence on *kyōka* surimono’s development in the nineteenth century.

Finally, after all of this prevarication, an absurdity: most writers who have treated surimono to date have made little effort to define the genre in more than a brief and circumstantial way, for surimono’s commissioners themselves originally made a pointed effort to distinguish these pieces clearly from commercial prints, utilizing distinct formats, papers, coloring, printing techniques and pictorial content. Therefore, with the vast majority of surimono, their nature as a distinct form is self-evident, and they could almost never be mistaken for a mass-market print. Nevertheless, there are some particularly vexed cases whose inclusion/exclusion is a matter of definition, two of which have just been mentioned, others to be described shortly. But relative ease in labeling does not correspond with a degree of knowledge concerning what the label itself actually signifies, that is to say, what the nature of surimono and the place they hold in relation to the practices of art, poetry, society and politics are. Moreover, the ability to identify an object is quite different from an ability to specify the characteristics of an object that are essential to that identification, and it is this step, breaking down an entity into its component parts—material format, nature of content, method of practice and aesthetic approach—that is necessary if we are to look for the historical origins of those parts, and of their combination into the whole. Let me begin then, with no pretensions of objectivity, by establishing the history and uses of the term ‘surimono,’ in order to distill from these the generic placement and essential characteristics that have traditionally been given to the form.

The Origins and Meanings of “Surimono”: Pre-Meiji Era References

I open with ‘Japan,’ not to privilege the ‘native view,’ but for chronological reasons, in order to establish the contexts in which the term ‘surimono’ was originally coined and employed. This disclaimer may sound odd, as ‘surimono’ is, after all, assumed to be a ‘Japanese’ word and phenomenon, but soon after the appearance of ‘Japanese art’ as an important player on the international stage in the late nineteenth century, the term became universal, albeit always posited as bearing the impress of a conceptual reality made in Japan, regardless of its actual usage and redefined content. Moreover, it is important to emphasize that those Tokugawa writers who used this term to refer to a particular form were as limited as—and in many ways, more limited than—the contemporary viewer, who has the advantage of being able to examine a broader range of materials in determining a genre definition. All too often, the early or original uses of a term are taken as absolute, without awareness of the particular historical contingencies and limitations on which they are based. In other words, although it is certainly true that a Tokugawa viewer is closer to the living practice of surimono in his/her particular moment than we can ever be, it is equally true that this closeness brings with it circumscribed vision, as seen in the frequent changes in the meaning of ‘surimono’ during this period. Similarly, in the realm of popular culture and genre description, the Tokugawa writer suffers from a less disciplined use of terminology than the contemporary, having fewer secondary sources that relate to these phenomena, requiring each commentator essentially to build from scratch definitions of key terms, as well as a descriptive approach, according to his personal experiences and interests.⁷⁵ Perhaps it is for these reasons, furthermore, that the early

⁷⁵ For example, surimono are referred to variously in historical sources as *kaishi surimono* 懷紙摺物, *saitan surimono* 歳旦摺物, *shinnen surimono* 新年摺物, *daishō surimono* 大小摺物, and *surimono-e* 刷物絵. Some Edo Period writers assume that they are distinct from pictorial calendars (絵暦) and New Year poetic anthologies (歳旦帳), while others assume their unity with them.

uses and definitions of *surimono* were of little consequence for modern writers on the topic, even in Japan, where the paradigms for the study of *ukiyo-e* as a field of art, under which *surimono* was treated, were adopted whole scale from the West with little critical resistance. Therefore, although we can learn a great deal by following the birth and early transformations of the word ‘*surimono*,’ it is necessary to historicize the uses of this term, and not to mistake chronological priority for either descriptive correctness or formational influence in the creation of modern views.

The term ‘*surimono*’ was created, lexically, by the combination of two Chinese characters, the graph for ‘rub’ or ‘print’ (摺), with the graph for ‘thing’ (物). This amalgamation has been called a ‘made in Japan’ word, as it has no basis in Chinese usage.⁷⁶ Considered phonologically, ‘*mono*’ has been considered to be a basic term of early origins among the primitive tribes in the Japanese archipelago, where it was used to refer to the essence of particular things, thus meaning spirits as well as discrete objects and ideas, while ‘*suru*’ is a verb of uncertain origins, with links to similar sounding words of related meanings in Malay and Korea.⁷⁷ In the Heian Period, ‘*suri*-’ was used as a prefix to refer to something stenciled, printed or dyed, and so is most frequently encountered in relation to cloth, as in the celebrated ‘*surigoromo*’ (摺衣・printed/dyed robe) poem of the first section of *Ise Monogatari* (伊勢物語).⁷⁸ The addition of ‘*mono*’ to a nominalized verbal base, like ‘*suri*,’ to create a general category noun is a common pattern of word formation in Japanese, with examples including *makimono* (巻物・‘rolled thing,’ scroll), *kimono* (着物・‘worn thing,’

⁷⁶ The Chinese term for woodblock print is *bǎn-huà* (版画・‘block picture’). The Japanese equivalent, *hanga*, was only used from the twentieth century, to designate the modern art print.

⁷⁷ *Kokugo gogen jiten* (Tokyo: Azakura shobo, 1976) 294 and *Zoku kokugo gogen jiten* (Tokyo: Azakura shobo, 1985) 238-239. The origins of the term remain purely speculative, but phonetic similarities to the Korean *seul* and the Malay *sir* (*gisir*, *yasir*) suggest influence of some kind, perhaps from a mutual source.

⁷⁸ *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, v.8: *Taketori monogatari*, *Ise monogatari*, *Yamato monogatari*, *Heichū monogatari* (Shogakkan, 1971), 133. An English translation can be found in McCullough (Stanford University Press, 1968), 69

clothing) and *tabemono* (食べ物・‘eaten thing,’ food). The first appearance of “surimono” in extant literature, a 3/1094 entry in *Chūyūki* (中右記), the journal of Fujiwara no Munetada 藤原宗忠 (1062-1141), follows this precedent, simply replacing a more specific referent like ‘*koromo*’ or ‘*hakama*’ with the general nominal ‘*mono*,’ to refer to something dyed or stenciled.⁷⁹ Although later usage limits the meaning of ‘*suri*’ from dyeing and stenciling to exclusively printing, and so from cloth to paper, ‘surimono’ in its contemporary definition falls back on this generic sense, referring to *any* printed work, whatever its content, function or nature. Thus the first, most common definition of surimono in modern dictionaries is simply “something printed” (印刷した物).⁸⁰ In slightly more specific usage, however, ‘surimono’ refers to any work privately printed and distributed for an individual purpose,⁸¹ while in its most particularized definition, it signifies prints made in such a manner by members of poetry groups in the Tokugawa and Meiji Periods.⁸² Chronologically, however, uses

⁷⁹ Munetada uses the phrase “*surimono heishi*” (摺物兵士) to refer to armed soldiers, among parallel references to classes of people by the clothing representing their status, such as *eboshi no mono* (烏帽子者) and *hoi* (布衣). “Surimono” in this context presumably means the dyed stuffs of the warriors. This reference is the only known pre-Tokugawa Era use of “surimono,” which does not appear in sources such as the *Muromachi jidaibetsu jiten*. The context of this idiosyncratic reference suggests that the term *did not* in fact originally refer to works on paper, nor was it a common usage. My conclusions thus contrast sharply with those of Roger Keyes, who seems to assume from the appearance of the term “surimono” in *Chūyūki* that it was “a catch-all term already current in Kyōto when the first fan-shaped woodcuts of genre subjects were printed there in the eleventh century” (*The Hotei Encyclopedia of Japanese Woodblock Prints*, Leiden: Hotei Press, 2006), 221. Keyes does not present evidence of textual references mentioning these fans as “surimono,” nor have I been able to find any. In fact, I believe the generic use of surimono as “a print” is strictly a modern definition, based on the suggestive etymological formation of the term, and has no historical support.

⁸⁰ *Nihon kokugo daijiten* (Shogakkan, 1987), 533.

⁸¹ For example, in Ishikawa Takuboku’s *Byōin no mado* of 1908, “surimono” is used to refer to a doctor’s private advertisement. See *ibid*, and also footnote 5. Late surimono, even those with poetry, likewise seem to have taken on promotional functions in the early twentieth century.

⁸² Such prints are sometimes referred to as *surimono-e*, or “surimono pictures,” as in the 1844 edition of the *Ukiyo-e ruikō*. But this is a later imposition, as initial references use only “surimono,” not “surimono-e.” Although “surimono” most typically refers to single sheet publications by poetry groups, it has also been sometimes used to mean short, privately produced poetry pamphlets as well, as in Buson’s letters of the 1770s and early 80s. In fact, influenced by Buson’s usage, Louise Virgin, in her study of a Buson surimono (*Yosa Buson and the Dawn of the Bashō Revival: A Surimono of a Cuckoo Bird in a Tree*. Dartmouth College, 1992, 6-7) defines surimono as “including pamphlets” and “circulated by subscription,” by which she apparently means *saitanchō*, *kubaribon* and other small

of ‘surimono’ in regard to printed works appear in precisely the opposite order, moving from this last, most specific referent in its earliest uses towards more generalized understandings only in modern times. It is, of course, by this last definition that surimono will be used here, though it pays to keep these levels of description in mind, particularly when dealing with modern Japanese references to ‘surimono.’

While principles of word formation might suggest, then, that the transformation of the prefix ‘*suri-*’ from dyeing to printing consequently transformed ‘surimono’ into a broad category term for any printed object, in fact, Tokugawa Period uses of ‘surimono’ are for the most part limited to this last, most specific sense. The term emerges from the mid-eighteenth century specifically in relation to privately commissioned woodblock prints of *haikai* poetry, distributed as seasonal gifts to patrons and fellow participants in the poetic circles of the time. This particular word choice, which stands in contrast to the suffixes ‘-e’ (絵) or ‘-zuri’ (刷) in period use for commercial prints (*tan-e*, *urushi-e*, *beni-e*, *uki-e*, *benizuri-e*)⁸³ removes the emphasis from printing technique and pictorial nature, thus differentiating surimono from mass, commercial single sheet productions. The term, likewise, with its connection to Heian literary references to dyed goods, may possibly have summoned up a more courtly sense than any of the contemporary terms for printing. ‘Surimono,’ moreover, may also have taken on a special shade of meaning from the particular use of ‘suri’ at renga meetings, where it meant to delay one’s turn in a linked verse sequence in order to work out a more thoughtful verse.⁸⁴ In this context, ‘suri-mono’

haikai publications. Other sources, however such as the *Kogo daijiten* (Kadokawa, 1999), specifically emphasize surimono as “not taking book form” (書冊の態をなさないもの), 509.

⁸³ 丹絵、漆絵、紅絵、浮絵、紅刷絵

⁸⁴ *Iwanami kogo jiten*, (Iwanami shoten, 1975) 707, no.3. As an example, the work *Hyōban: Naniwa no kao* (評判難波の顔) has the phrase 張合の無い遅吟摺らば摺り次第にして置け [“This is a slow recitation without spirit; work on it for a while and pass to the next round.”]

would signify that the poetic contents of a print were not simply spontaneous, but carefully polished (*suri* as ‘brush’ or ‘rub’) in advance. Such a meaning is in fact already suggested by the graph used for the *suri* of surimono (摺), which combines the radical for ‘hand’ with ‘learn’ or ‘practice’—implying a movement of repetition towards mastery—pointedly distinct from the more commonly used character for ‘printing.’⁸⁵ The characterization of surimono as the “jewels of Japanese printmaking,” to quote from the title of a recent exhibition, is thus to some extent originally implied in the term (‘rubbed/polished thing’) itself.⁸⁶ It is according to these ‘polished’ qualities that *Tsurezure suigakawa* (つれづれ粋川) a 1783 *sharebon* (洒落本・“stylish book”) penned by one “Enkō Hōshi” (艶好法師・“The Sensual Priest”) describes the surimono of *haikai* masters as “ever concerned about appearance.”⁸⁷

The earliest extant surimono, with *haikai* verse, date to the opening years of the eighteenth century, but there is no textual evidence available to suggest that these were immediately referred to as surimono. Rather, individual pieces simply bore titles with the occasion for which it was made, usually the New Year, and the envelopes that contained them the name of the intended recipient.⁸⁸ By mid-century, however, judging by the *Matsudaira Minokami nikki* (松平美濃守日記) the household journal of the Mino governor and *haikai* poet Yanagisawa Nobutoki (柳沢信鴻), penname Beiō 米翁 (1724-1792), in connection with Beiō’s extant surimono, the use of the term for such prints had become standard. Beiō’s journal is full of references to

⁸⁵ This latter character is the *suri* (刷) used as suffix in ‘benizuri-e’ etc., most often found in regard to commercial prints. Some modern writers do use 刷物, or even 刷り物, however, rather than 摺物.

⁸⁶ Joan Mirviss and John Carpenter, *Jewels of Japanese Printmaking: Surimono of the Bunka-Bunsei Era 1804-1830* (Tokyo: Ōta Museum, 2000)

⁸⁷ 俳諧師の摺物配るもいづれみてくれ離れず.

⁸⁸ Titles for 1718 works include: “Kyōhō san saitan” (享保三歳旦) “Kyōhō san no toshi saitan” (享保三の歳歳旦) “Kyōhō san tsuchinoe inu-doshi” (享保三戌戌年) “Kyōhō san tsuchinoe inu koyomi” (享保三戌戌暦) etc. These dated titles, as I will show in the next chapter, derive directly from the opening inscriptions (端作・*hashi-tsukuri*) on sheets of presentation poetry (*kaishi*).

surimono and related items sent and received, as these entries for the closing months of 1748 indicate:

11th Month, 9th Day: Distributed a “First Snow Surimono” (初雪摺物)
11th Month, 16th Day: Left a surimono on the theme of
the Shōyō Garden (逍遙園題摺物) with Koshō
11th Month, 20th Day: Received “The Wild Duck New Year
Anthology” (鴨歳旦帖) from Baikō
12th Month: Left a surimono calendar (摺物大小) with Tōdō
12th Month, 5th Day: Received the *Suri-hakama hikitsuke* (摺袴引付・a
Saitanchō New Year Anthology) from Kojū
12th Month, 12th Day: Received a snow surimono (雪摺物) from Baikō
12th Month, 20th Day: Received an Ise surimono (伊セ摺物)⁸⁹

Although none of the works listed are extant, Beiō’s descriptions and dating give us some impressions of the surimono practices of *haikai* poets at this time, in both frequency and type. It is worth noting again that the word *e*, or “picture,” commonly used to refer to commercial prints at this time, is absent from Beiō’s notes. Surimono are emphasized here as a different kind of print, in which the pictorial element is not primary.

Nevertheless, whatever these semantic distinctions between surimono and the products of mass or commercial printing, eighteenth and nineteenth century accounts of the development of woodblock printing make note of surimono and other private productions of *haikai* poets as seminal in the advancement of printing techniques, particularly in terms of color printing. These writings also remark on the connection of *haikai* poets with the birth of surimono, a fact largely lost from view in the modern period, when surimono are incorporated within *ukiyo-e* as one of the practices of its artist-designers, mostly in relation to *kyōka* poetry. A mid-nineteenth century account

⁸⁹ Translated from Kira Sueo, *Haisho no sekai* (Tōkyō: Seishōdō Shoten, 1999), 219-220. Unfortunately, the *Minokami nikki* is not available for public view, but I have been able to confirm with Prof. Kira, who has had an opportunity to study it, that these references to surimono he has singled out are fairly representative of the overall content. Another significant passage from Yanagisawa’s other diary, *Enyūki*, is quoted in Ozawa Hiromu’s essay in *Edogaku Jiten* (Tokyo: Kyobundō, 1984) and contains equally extensive references to surimono.

even places the birth of surimono, no doubt erroneously, in the early seventeenth century, before even the development of single sheet commercial prints:

During the Genna Era [元和・1616-23] the *haikai* Master Katsukatsubō Kyūshitsu cut a board from a cherry tree in his garden, sketched a pine tree upon it, and had it engraved and printed by a master printer named Chikamatsu Kōsai. This was the first surimono.⁹⁰

Far more closely attuned with the historical and material record that has come down to us, though still not error-free, is an account of the birth of color printing in *Kyojitsu baka-monogatari* (虚実馬鹿語・*Truths and Lies Told by an Idiot*) of 1771. Its anonymous author states:

At the beginning of the Genbun Era [1736-1740], when the group of Bōjian Keirin⁹¹ released a spring surimono with a picture of a bow for ceremonial exorcism, Yoshida Gyosen for the first time used a three block printing method, with blue-green, yellow and rose, as well as a technique for pushing out the white areas [embossing] that caused a stir in the society of that time. The now-common *haikai* surimono of our day are the flowers of these innovations.⁹²

⁹⁰ “A Brief Account of the Publication of Stone Prints, Surimono and the Origins of Eastern Brocade Prints,” a text inscribed on a woodblock print designed by Hakusanjin Hoku’i, a pupil of Hokusai, which depicts woodblock artisans. The print is in the possession of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Its text, full of legendary and fanciful attributions, was introduced by Strange (1903), who gave it rather more credence than it is worth. Unable to examine a copy of this print, I have drawn this quote directly from Keyes (1985), 18. Keyes, associating this account with the next quoted, and following the lifespan of Katsui Kyūshitsu (penname: Katsukatsubō), 1693-1764, suggests that Genna is a likely a mistake for Genbun (1736-40). Although this is quite possible, the actual state of surimono production in the Genbun period was far more advanced than this account would then suggest (or Keyes suspected), already including limited block color printing, while even the earliest extant surimono were produced through well-established publishers, not self directed with blocks cut from one’s own tree! An alternate possibility would be that the name of the poet was wrong but the early period intended, which would explain the extremely primitive process described. Regardless, the text is full of exaggeration and without factual authority (it attributes the invention of printing to a direct disciple of the Buddha!) but does certainly indicate that surimono were considered a unique genre, separate from commercial prints (*nishiki-e*) and stone prints (*ishizuri-e*) in the mid-nineteenth century.

⁹¹ Also known as Renshi 蓮之 (1680-1742). A frequent contributor to early surimono, and one of the influential members of the *Goshikizumi* group. See Appendix I for details.

⁹² Quoted from Kira Suetō “Ichimaizuri ni tsuite,” in *Haisho no sekai* (Seishōdō shoten, 2000), 219. There has been some confusion on the reading of the title, transliterated as *Kyōjitsu baka monogatari* in both Forrer (1979), 4-5 and Keyes (1985), 13).

元文のはじめ、卯時庵珪琳の社中より、春興
のすり物出し時破魔弓の画を吉田魚川はじめて
青黄赤の三遍摺りをなし、およびうち出しの
白きを工みて其頃世に鳴り、今普く俳諧摺
ものゝ花とはなれり。

Although each of these accounts is compromised by factual problems, to be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, they represent the early recognition of the link between *haikai* practices and surimono, as well as between surimono and the advancement of printing technology. The progressive spirit of *haikai* poets, which could not always find ready support from the general market and commercial publishers, found its outlet in privately funded and produced publications, of which surimono comprised just one part. *Haikai*'s bold willingness to experiment in poetry is also seen formally in related works like *kubarihon* (配本・privately commissioned gift books, often illustrated *haikai* anthologies) and in *egoyomi* (pictorial calendars.) In both of these fields too, as in surimono, the use of novel techniques and subject matter are noted to have led to advances in commercial printing techniques and subjects.⁹³

Particularly noteworthy in this regard are the picture calendar meetings (絵暦会・*egoyomi-kai*) of 1765-66, at which groups led by the Edo *haikai* poets Kyosen (巨川) and Sakei (沙鷄) competed to produce the cleverest and most striking images. Utilizing advanced color printing technology that revolutionized both commercial and privately funded printmaking, these calendar prints were highly celebrated in popular culture, reprinted in commercial editions and written about avidly in accounts of the period. Their influence on the subsequent growth of surimono, especially the new line

⁹³ Ōta Nampo, for example, describes the progressive nature of the calendar print parties in his *Kana sogi*, and again in *Neboke sensei bunshū*, puts into mock Chinese verse the failures of publishers to sell prints made with the old technology once privately commissioned calendars had revealed to all the possibilities for full color printing (see discussion of these texts by Kobayashi Tadashi in *Nishikie no tanjō*, 10). The memoirs of Suwa Shichizaemon Yoritake are also quoted in regard to the origins of “*nishiki-e*” (錦絵・full color woodblock prints), which are described as the result of the calendar print exchanges of 1765. See *ibid*, 9.

of surimono that developed in relation to *kyōka* poetry in Edo towards the nineteenth century, was so profound that *egoyomi* began to be conflated with surimono in writings from this place and time, and much confusion about the relation of these forms still remains in critical writings. In fact, most modern studies of surimono, limiting their focus to the *ukiyo-e*-influenced late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century surimono made in Edo, posit these picture calendar parties as the origins of surimono, ignoring the century of woodblock printed poetic presentations preceding them. But if we examine these privately made *egoyomi* in comparison to surimono produced up to that time, clear distinctions can be made. Particularly, whereas early surimono were primarily produced as reflections of a poetic group, and text rather than picture based, 1765-66 *egoyomi* were individually designed works that relied exclusively on visual images. Nevertheless, we can also trace important links that reveal surimono as the basis for privately made *egoyomi*, not vice-versa, showing that in fact these picture calendars emphasizing individual wit and sophistication grew out of Edoza *haikai* poetry and its employment in privately made surimono.⁹⁴ Pre-1765 surimono not only included calendars and picture calendars among its productions, but also developed the idea of giving poetry a material—and sometimes pictorial—form suited to its content, as well as defining the networks and lines for its production and distribution. The relationship between *egoyomi* and surimono is therefore complex, but the forms are best characterized as discrete, albeit at points interwoven genres,⁹⁵ as

⁹⁴ The intimate links between *ukiyo-e* print making and post-Kikaku *haikai* aesthetics in Edo deserve a chapter of their own. I will touch on them in Chapter Three, in discussing the Sentokumon poets. A study of the *ukiyo-e* designer and *haikai* poet Okumura Masanobu and his transformation of Edo *haikai* poetic principles such as *hiyu*, *share*, *yatsushi* and *mitate* into visual form in woodblock prints would go far towards unraveling these connections. Julie Wolfgram's dissertation on Masanobu, not yet publicly available, may contain answers to a number of these points.

⁹⁵ The majority of early, pre-1765 *egoyomi* were in fact commercial prints sold on the general market, which of itself would distinguish them as a genre from the field of surimono. But it bears note that Beiō's journal mentions a "calendar surimono" (*surimono daishō*) and privately printed calendar surimono (with *haikai* poetry) are extant from as early as 1721. See Chiba (1997), no.4, and also Okamoto (2002), no.31. I discuss this work in Chapter 3. In addition to deluxe printing techniques, rich paper type, soft color schemes, puzzle-like effects and historically layered content, the seasonal

they are in fact in the terminology used to describe them around the time of the 1765-66 meetings.

Nevertheless, the great success of these calendar print meetings brought private publications to public consciousness as never before, and as described, transformed the practices of *surimono* in approach, usage, technique and breadth, ultimately leading to the conflation of privately made *egoyomi* with *surimono* in the nineteenth century. More immediately, the popularization of private publications after 1765-66 altered both the uses and understanding of the term ‘*surimono*’ outside of the poetry groups, as individually commissioned prints taking not only the exact size and format of poetic *surimono*, but also their name, began to be distributed for completely personal, non-poetic purposes, such as announcements and invitations. A mere quarter century after the establishment of the term for woodblock printed poetry presentations, therefore, ‘*surimono*’ was already undergoing significant change, in relation to the valorization of the private publication, its elegance and power, after the astounding success of the 1765-66 calendar print meetings. As can be seen in a number of references to *surimono* in the popular literature of the late eighteenth century, ‘*surimono*’ for a short time even came to mean primarily announcement prints, rather than poetry sheets, at least in *chōnin* culture. In the *sharebon* “The Playboy’s Dialect” (遊子方言・*Yūshi hōgen*) of 1770, the would-be “man-about-town” boasts offhandedly how annoying the pile of musical program *surimono* he receives is, thus suggesting that he is very well connected in elite circles.⁹⁶ The most

connections between privately made *egoyomi* and *saitan kyōka surimono* also lead to their conflation. I will attempt to sort out this confusion in the first part of my fourth chapter through a chronological approach, looking at *haikai surimono* and *egoyomi* as two streams of private publications that originally ran alongside one another in the development of *kyōka surimono*—as large, folded sheets for groups and miniature calendar prints with poetry for individuals—eventually to combine in the mid-sized *shikishi surimono*, created in sets to reflect both individuals and groups.

⁹⁶ いや通り者になると此会ばかりうるさいものだ。摺物ばかりも大ぶたまっているぞ。
 (“When one becomes a man-of-the-town, even these meetings themselves become quite bothersome. Just the *surimono* for them pile up high!”) *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* (Shogakkan, 1971) V.47, 62-

celebrated *kibyōshi* (黄表紙・”yellow-back book”) by Santō Kyōden (山東京伝), the “Grilled and Basted Edo-Born Playboy” (江戸生まれ艶気の蒲焼・*Edo umare uwaki no kabayaki*) of 1785 has the fake lovers Enjirō and Ukina commissioning an announcement surimono for their fake love-suicide, from none other than Kyōden’s *ukiyo-e* master Kitao Shigemasa (北尾重政).⁹⁷ Roger Keyes has also introduced a c.1794 commercial print by the great *ukiyo-e* artist Kitagawa Utamaro (喜多川歌麿), showing a famous courtesan of the day holding an announcement surimono—which is delicately embossed in a manner similar to the print Kyōden describes—as a symbol of her high status.⁹⁸ Although a digression from the original purpose and use of surimono, it is precisely this movement away from the exclusive connection of surimono with *haikai* that allowed the surimono form to be adopted by the new poetry movement that rose to swift popularity in Edo in the 1780s and 90s, *kyōka*.

The rise of *kyōka* as the main poetic medium for surimono produced in Edo from the 1790s signified a return to surimono as primarily a poetic presentation sheet, although some announcement surimono continued to be made. *Kyōka*, which shared a love of canonical allusions and *ga-zoku* (雅俗) past-present clashes with city (especially Edoza) *haikai*, took over some of the riddle functions and *mitate-e* approach of *egoyomi*, finding its place in woodblock printed inscriptions on two parallel fronts, miniature works with calendar markings (essentially *egoyomi* with

63. These meetings and their surimono are ‘bothersome,’ presumably, as they bring with them certain social obligations, as well as because they take up space. This is a comic inversion: most people would be delighted to receive such surimono, with invitations to elegant social events beautifully printed on rich, expensive paper.

⁹⁷ “*Futari no jisei no hokku wa surimono ni shite naka no chō e kubaraseru. [Shian:] “Karan [Kitao Shigemasa] ga kaita hasu no e wo ōbōsho e karazuri to wa ii obeshimeshi-tsuki da” [The world-departing hokku of the pair are made into a surimono, to be distributed in the central block of the Yoshiwara. [Mr. Bad Plan:] “What a superb idea it was to have the picture of the lotus Kitao Shigemasa drew blind printed on these grand sheets of proclamation paper!”] Nihon koten bungaku zenshū V. 46: Kibyōshi senryū kyōka (Shogakkan, 1972), 131-2. The illustration on the latter page shows the surimono folded and wrapped with decorative cords for presentation, piled on the floor of the room where Ukina and Enjirō are preparing, just like kabuki actors in the green room, for their mock love suicide.*

⁹⁸ Keyes (1985), 15

kyōka), reflecting individual inspiration, and more traditionally formatted *surimono*, with multiple poets appearing on a grand-sized sheet as representations of poetic groups. It was this former strand that directly tied *egoyomi* and *kyōka* *surimono*, leading to the mistaken but still prevailing idea that the two forms are completely allied historically, or even that *surimono* grew out of *egoyomi*. Nevertheless, period accounts of the 1765-66 picture calendars do not describe them as *surimono*, only as *egoyomi*, for these prints lack the poetic texts essential to the definition of ‘*surimono*’ up to this time.⁹⁹ In the early nineteenth century, however, Morishima Chūryō 森嶋中良 (1756-1810) an important scholar and *kyōka* poet under the pen name Shinratei Manzō I (森羅亭萬象),¹⁰⁰ made a comparison of pre-and post-1765 ‘*surimono*’ on the basis of *egoyomi* alone,¹⁰¹ and by the 1820s, 1765-66 calendars were retrospectively dubbed ‘*daishō surimono*’ (大小摺物) a term which had previously described *surimono* with calendar markings *in addition to* poetry.¹⁰² This change suggests another shift in the understanding of ‘*surimono*’ around the turn of the nineteenth century, after *kyōka*-based *surimono*—influenced by *egoyomi* to include full color printing and embossing, as well as clever literary allusions and disguised references to the year—had radically transformed contemporary impressions of the genre.

⁹⁹ *Kyojitsu baka-monogatari* of 1771, for example, in the continuation of the passage just quoted, relates the techniques developed for earlier *surimono* to those used for *egoyomi*, but never refers to *egoyomi* as “*surimono*,” maintaining a distinction between the two. In fact, entirely to the contrary, it emphasizes *surimono*’s exclusive connection to *haikai*, treating *haikai* *surimono* as a distinct and individual form.

¹⁰⁰ Sometimes also Bانشō. Manzō II was a prolific contributor to *surimono*.

¹⁰¹ *Hogo kago* (反古籠・“The Waste Basket”), which utilizes an unidentified pre-1765 *egoyomi* designed by Ōba Hōsui after an idea by Hiraga Gennai for its “*surimono*” comparison, finding the earlier pieces “course and quite different.” See Kobayashi (1996) 9-10; Forrer (1979), 5-6; and *Nihon zuihitsu taisei: dai-ni ki* (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1973) for the full text.

¹⁰² For example, the 1824 memoirs *Karine no yume* (仮寝の夢・“Borrowed Sleep”) of Suwa Shichizaemon Yoritake 諏訪七左衛門頼武 (1748-?), reprinted in Komiyama Nanryō, ed. *Seikakaku zappen*. For this and a discussion of the conflation of *egoyomi* and *surimono*, see Keyes (1985), 18. For a modern definition of *daishō surimono*, see Forrer (1979), 4. “*Daishō surimono*” is also used retroactively to refer to 1765 calendar prints in the nineteenth century version of the *Ukiyoe ruikō*, under the listing for Suzuki Harunobu. See Nakada Ed., *Ukiyoe ruikō* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1941), 98.

Just the opposite trend, however, was taking place at this time in the prints themselves, with a drastic reduction of announcement surimono and ‘pure’ (poetry-free) *egoyomi* as *kyōka* replaced *haikai* as the dominant poetic component of surimono in Edo. Ōta Nanpo 大田南畝(1749-1823), leader of the Edo *kyōka* movement, carefully notes in his recollections both the first *kyōka* surimono and the first kabuki surimono (also with *kyōka*), each released in the 1780s, marking a point of transition where the exclusive *haikai* basis of the form was encroached upon by other kinds of content.¹⁰³ But although their poetic base had altered, surimono in nineteenth century Edo became primarily poetic in nature once again, only linked now with *kyōka* groups and their styles, rather than *haikai*. And as the following self-referential poem on a surimono suggests, these pieces were now associated almost exclusively once more with the New Year, and used as part of its ritual celebration. Hints of surimono’s origins in *kissho*, as it relates to the *kakizome*, and cosmology, in the centrality given to zodiac signs, appear directly in this 1818 example (Figure 6):

<i>Nenrei no</i>	As a New Year’s Rite
<i>Sage-dōran ni</i>	I’ve surimono in my pouch
<i>Surimono no</i>	Pictures drawn for them
<i>E mo kaki-zome no</i>	As the year’s first writing:
<i>Ryūko baichiku</i>	Tiger & Dragon; Plum & Bamboo ¹⁰⁴

This piece also implicitly reveals the influence of *egoyomi* on nineteenth century surimono, with hidden meanings embedded in words and images, and clever reference to the zodiac animal of the year, both essential characteristics of *egoyomi*.

¹⁰³ As noted in *The Footman-Kite (Yakko dako)* of 1813 and *Inspiration for Vulgar Ears (Zokuji kosui)* of 1788. See Keyes (1984), 20-21 and Hamada, Ed. *Ōta Nanpo zenshū*. Iwanami Shoten, 1985-1990.

¹⁰⁴ 年礼の提とうらんにすりものの絵もかきそめの竜寅梅竹. This piece is taken from Rappard-Boon (2000), 8 and re-transcribed (“sagetōranni” to “sage-dōran ni”). The print is for a tiger year, and contains hidden wordplay, including “nenrei no sake” (New Year ritual drink), “tōran” as play on *tora* (tiger), and “kakizome” (first writing of the year) as a bridge word with “e mo kaki” (draw a picture). The final auspicious combination, elements often found in surimono, are favorite subjects for the ritual first writing of the New Year (*kakizome*). Note, in connection with the *uta-bukuro* verse covered in the Introduction, the emphasis on the surimono satchel, here fancifully made of tiger skin.



Figure 6: “Tiger Skin Pouch with Plum Branch.” A *shikishi-ban* surimono for the New Year of 1818, with *kyōka* verses by Reireian Saichō and Sanshōan Michitsura, and illustration by Totoya Hokkei. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

The rise of the *kyōka* surimono in Edo in no way meant the end of *haikai* surimono practice, however, which actually continued unbroken into the twentieth century. While these post-1765 transformations were happening in Edo, the famous *haikai* poet Yosa no Buson 与謝蕪村 (1716-1783) was making his own experiments with the surimono form in Kyōto. Buson corresponded quite frequently on his surimono practice, taking it as a serious reflection of his poetry. He records the size of his surimono editions, the publisher and cost, and his evaluation of the relative success of his endeavors, providing invaluable material for the study of surimono, and for the rise of a Kamigata version of this form. For Buson, the definition of surimono was inseparable from poetry, specifically for him, *haikai*. And for the Kamigata tradition that developed after him, though it dabbled occasionally in *kyōka*, *haikai* was the heart of surimono. While there are almost no nineteenth century Edo surimono with poetry only, this remains a major type in Kyōto-Ōsaka of the same period, suggesting the lingering primacy of poetry in this tradition. Other Kamigata surimono have illustration in the Shijō (四条) style founded by Buson's student Matsumura Gekkei 松村月溪 (1752-1811, better known to posterity as the artist Goshun 呉春), with whom Buson collaborated on his own surimono. Gekkei's Shijō style itself can be seen as closely aligned with the nature of Kamigata *haikai* poetry.

This overview of Tokugawa Period definitions of surimono parallels in brief the fuller history I provide in the following chapters, and I will have occasion to return to many of these facts, quotes and references later in a more detailed context. But for the moment, what stands out as most important from this variety of references to surimono is the multiplicity of definitions of the form in the Tokugawa Period. Surimono, like the general practice of woodblock printing, passed through a number of stages and transformed with technological developments and changing public interests. Though no single Tokugawa Era writer seems fully aware of these

changes—the closest perhaps being Morishima Chūryō's broad-view comparison of the qualities of pre- and post-1765 “surimono” (represented by *egoyomi*)—taken as a whole these writers reveal just how fluid and flexible the form, and its definitions, could be. Nevertheless, with the exception of a brief period after the 1765 *egoyomi* exchanges, when announcement surimono and *egoyomi* without poetry prevail, a broad look at references to surimono through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reveals just how deeply enmeshed this form was with poetic practices.

Unfortunately, Tokugawa Period approaches to surimono were to be displaced in Japan's processes of modernization and Westernization, in which traditional, plebian practices like surimono were initially held in little regard and allowed to fall into disuse, then, once dead, resurrected and proudly embraced, albeit now within a modern, Western-style framework of traditional Japanese art and culture. Moreover, although ‘surimono’ as a term was exported to the West, the implications it had developed as a living form were not carried with it, instead altering according to the way in which Europeans and Americans viewed Japanese prints, assuming them to have been made as works of art. Therefore, artists took the place of poets as surimono's primary creators, and for decades the place of poetry in the form was virtually ignored.¹⁰⁵ Thus, when surimono, now included within *ukiyo-e* printmaking as a whole, becomes an object of interest once again in modern Japan, it is entirely within the Western paradigm of surimono as *ukiyo-e*, and *ukiyo-e* as works of art, which wholly dominates Japanese studies until at least the 1980s, and in fact continues

¹⁰⁵ Following the understanding of art in the West, literary and visual modes of expression there were strictly segregated, written poetry seen as having no place on the artistic canvass. This ideological restriction is one factor leading to the poetry on surimono being completely overlooked in most early works treating the subject. An inability to read Japanese, which might seem the most obvious reason to ignore poetry, was not the main factor, as we will see, for a number of the leading writers (Goncourt, Strange, Binyon) actually note that they had Japanese translators helping them to deal with texts, and some non-poetic surimono (invitations with vapid content) were translated, in order for text to be dismissed.

to hold sway to this day, despite recent challenges.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, surprisingly, until the last few decades, surimono had been of little interest to most Japanese scholars, who discussed them only as documentary works for dating artistic signatures and styles, and rarely examined the poetry on these pieces, which simply did not fit within the imported Western context of treating prints as works of fine art.¹⁰⁷ This, perhaps, is one reason why surimono were for so long undervalued in Japan, despite the broadly recognized importance of an artist like Katsushika Hokusai, approximately half of whose personal oeuvre was comprised of surimono, and whose school comprised the largest group of surimono designers.¹⁰⁸ As a result, to comprehend the modern reception and definition of surimono, we must look not to Japan, but to the West, where the significance of *ukiyo-e*, and surimono along with it, will be asserted, but according to a configuration with profound implications for the contexts in which surimono are understood and treated to this day.

¹⁰⁶ The status of *ukiyo-e* as art has been challenged by Takahashi Katsuhiko, a fringe figure in Japanese *ukiyo-e* studies, in his 1992 *Edo no nyū media*. More recently, in the United States, Allan Hockley has presented a case study of an *ukiyo-e* designer's work in the context of popular culture: *The Prints of Isoda Koryūsai: Floating World Culture and Its Consumers in Eighteenth Century Japan*. See also *The Commercial and Cultural Climate of Japanese Printmaking*, which I reviewed from precisely this point of view in *Andon: Shedding Light on Japanese Art*, No. 77 (Leiden: Society for the Japanese Arts, 2004) 42-49.

¹⁰⁷ Suzuki Jūzō commented directly on this situation, though not diagnosing its cause, in the *Edo-gaku jiten* (Tōkyō: Kōbundō, 1984, 489), stating: "As for this sort of research regarding surimono, it is surprising to note that until just recently surimono did not constitute much of a focal point [in Japan]. On the contrary, it's appropriate to say that it was foreigners (Roger Keyes and others) who took the lead in advancing these studies." Suzuki, who I will argue had an early and influential role in influencing contemporary surimono studies with his 1977 paper on interpreting *kyōka* surimono, goes on from here to assert the great value of this form for Edo studies. We can sense the underlying influence of the Western point of view on surimono, however, in Suzuki's strong assertion that surimono by definition must contain a picture.

¹⁰⁸ Figures on Hokusai's voluminous surimono output, following detailed studies by Nagata Seiji and Kubota Katuhiro, are given in Asano Shūgō's "Surimono Art and Literary Circles: The *Genroku kasen kai awase* and *Umazukushi* Series" in Gian Carlo Calza (ed.), *Hokusai* (New York/London: Phaidon Press, 2003) 58. Kubota, for example, claims to have personally counted 860 surimono by Hokusai, as opposed to the approximately 1000 commercial prints documented by Nagata in his *Hanbon-hanga saku hin mokuroku* for Hokusai. Asano notes that considering the limited editions of surimono and the difficulties in counting them, "it seems possible that the former [surimono] actually outnumbered the latter [commercial prints]."

Modern Reception: Early Writings and the Paradigms for Surimono Treatment

The late nineteenth century European “discovery” of Japanese art—represented in large part by its woodblock prints—has been the detailed subject of a number of books and dissertations.¹⁰⁹ The heated responses to the shock of seemingly unprecedented Japanese methods of representation and reproduction in the 1870s and 80s seemed to know no middle ground: either one was a Japanophile or a Japanophobe, singing the praises of an “intrinsically artistic race” or dismissing Japanese artistic techniques as the result of opium, excessive sunlight, a primitive mind, or biologically inferior eye structure.¹¹⁰ But without delving too deeply into the details of this fascinating period of cross-cultural contact, which have been covered well elsewhere, I would like to examine specifically the manner in which surimono were encountered in late nineteenth century Europe, and how they figured in early European and American writing from the 1880s to the Pacific War. Despite the overt fact that these early commentaries were based on a paucity of materials and a woefully inadequate understanding of surimono history, they nevertheless continue to exert

¹⁰⁹ My discussion of the early reception of Japanese art in Europe and America draws from numerous primary and secondary sources. The former include, on the European side, William Anderson’s “History of Japanese Art” in *Transaction of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, Vol. 3 (1879), 347-87, Louis Gonse’s 1883 *L’Art Japonais* (Paris: Picard & Kahn), articles from S. Bing, Ed.’s *Artistic Japan: A Monthly Illustrated Journal of Arts and Industries* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington (1888-1891), Edmond de Goncourt’s 1895 *Hokousai*, translated in Matthi Forrer ed., *Hokusai* (New York: Rizzoli, 1988), and his private journals, presented in George Becker and Edith Philips, eds. *Paris and the Arts 1851-1896* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), as well as the firsthand accounts of early collectors compiled by Max Putt in *Plunder and Pleasure: Japanese Art in the West 1860-1930* (Leiden: Hotei Publishing, 2003). On the American side, where the reception of Japanese prints in general, and surimono in particular, was substantially cooler, I have examined Ernest Fenollosa’s *Masters of Ukiyoe* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1896) in connection with his earlier reviews, and slightly later commentators such as Arthur Davison Ficke. Secondary accounts are led by Elisa Evett’s fine dissertation, “The Critical Reception of Japanese Art in Europe in the Late Nineteenth Century” (Cornell University, 1980) which also includes numerous translations from French newspapers, journals and reviews of the nineteenth century, supplemented by books on Japonisme by Gabriel Weisberg, *Japonism: Japanese Influences on French Art 1854-1910* (Cleveland Museum of Art, 1975) and, with Julia Meech, *Japonisme Comes to America: The Japanese Impact on the Graphic Arts 1876-1925* (New York: Henry Abrams, 1990). A strong, critical summary of the early reception of Japanese prints, and Fenollosa in particular, is given in the introduction of Allen Hockley’s *The Prints of Isoda Koryūsai* (Washington University Press, 2003).

¹¹⁰ Nor were these positions necessarily exclusive. See Evett, 129, for the sources of these quotes.

influence on the vision of scholars to this very day. For although the details they present are often easy enough to evaluate and reject, it is their underlying structure that has set a paradigm for the treatment of surimono, which still has not been completely overcome. Therefore, it is essential to lay bare exactly what the unstated assumptions in their arguments are, so that they too can be rationally analyzed and moved beyond.

I do not wish to suggest with this rhetoric of revelation and overcoming that there is something insidious lurking behind early accounts of surimono. If their writers can be critiqued for the imperialist gesture of positing Japanese art as a passive object under the masterful scrutiny of Western art history, overriding Japanese canons of taste in order to impose their own subjective order, it must also be said that they did so from genuine passion and love for the art, as well as at least professed ignorance of what Japanese standards of evaluation were.¹¹¹ For the exposure of these early writers to Japanese art was sudden, sporadic and untutored. Centuries of production at different levels and in different registers were received together, glimpses of parts had to serve as representative of the whole, and, initially at least, there was no one to sort this jumble out by chronology and context. Woodblock prints, being not only the most recently flourishing and readily understood of genres, but also mass produced and readily portable, became the primary means by which this elusive object labeled “Japanese art” was to become known in Europe, with little understanding that woodblock printing was more of a technology of reproduction for commercial purposes than the strictly artistic medium of its Western conception, and its products

¹¹¹ In actuality, however, as the closing section of William Anderson’s 1879 “A History of Japanese Art” makes clear, some Europeans knew very well that their standards of evaluation were based on entirely different principles and assumptions than Japanese, examining works shorn of the context of their production. For this very reason, however, Anderson argued that the European view had less prejudice, and was capable of finding fine art wherever it existed, uninfluenced by social and political (extra-artistic) criteria. See *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, Vol. 3, 347-387.

generally perceived as a common commercial commodities in Japan.¹¹² Moreover, the kinds of printed material imported were those that would attract the interest of Europeans, obviously those with images rather than just texts, and the more striking the image, the better. The European—particularly French—market paid a premium for such images, which were little valued in Japan, resulting in a mass exodus of prints through expatriate dealers like Hayashi Tadamasa 林忠正 (1853-1906). Woodblock prints, seen in number, thus became one of the best-known areas of “Japanese art,” and, by the turn of the century, an astonishing degree of expertise concerning them had been established. Discourse on prints was, in fact, far more advanced in Europe than in Japan, where the popular print had rarely been taken seriously, and the only substantial writings on the subject prior to European interest came from participants in its subculture.¹¹³ For early European writers, the assumptions that Japanese printmaking comprised a serious art, and that this art was emblematic of an exotic other called “Japan,” were the motivations driving their inquiries and shaping their results.

Surimono entered Europe together with and largely undifferentiated from *ukiyo-e* commercial prints. Though they were quickly recognized, due to their unique format and printing style, as forming a distinct category of Japanese prints, this was

¹¹² Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908), who had been living in Japan for seven years at the time, attempted to make this point clear to Western audiences in his 1885 review of Gonse’s *L’Art Japonais*. Fenollosa turned the tables by asking how Westerners would feel if the satirical drawings in a journal like ‘Puck’ were taken as the pinnacle of Western art. But his chidings did not make a serious impact on the kinds of writings on Japanese art produced in the next decades, and Fenollosa himself ultimately tuned his voice with the Western chorus, partly out of financial necessity, for his 1896 *Masters of Ukiyo-e*. In fact, the reception of Japanese art in the United States was substantially different from that in Europe, with a far deeper appreciation of Buddhist art, led by religious-oriented New Englanders such as Fenollosa, Edward Sylvester Morse (1838-1925) and William Sturgis Bigelow (1850-1926), following the earlier Buddhist explorations of Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) and Edward Elbridge Salisbury (1814-1901). In conflict with this appreciation of austere and serious Buddhist art, the ornate, playful *kyōka* surimono subsequently received a much cooler reception in the U.S. than in France, where the interest was much more in the colorful and salacious demimonde. I am indebted to Prof. Samuel Morse for his insights on the tenor of the New England scene and the reception of Japanese art there.

¹¹³ One of these writings, the *Ukiyo-e ruikō*, did provide the foundation, however, for some of the basic facts of lineage and biography on which European studies were based.

yet one that was always explicitly incorporated within the main body of *ukiyo-e*.¹¹⁴

With a glittering surface, thick, rich paper, and dreamy colors and designs, surimono caught the eye and fired the romantic spirit of many Europeans, who wrote of them in

¹¹⁴ As a descriptive term or category, “*ukiyo-e*” has been irresponsibly nebulous and poorly defined, and this very amorphousness allows all manner of pictorial art to be fit within its compass. A recent, brave-but-botched attempt by art historian Sandy Kita to bring some rigor to the term shows just how difficult “*ukiyo-e*” is to define (“From Shadow to Substance: Redfining Ukiyo-e” in The Floating World of Ukiyo-e: Shadows, Dreams and Substance, (Henry Abrams, 2001), 27-80. The essential problem is: does the term *ukiyo-e* define a medium (woodblock printing), a style (bright, energetic, idealistically stylized, bold-lined) or a subject matter (pictures of the floating world)? Although most nineteenth century Europeans called all pictorial woodblock prints *ukiyo-e*, and associated the term with a technique, in fact, *ukiyo-e* as a genre obviously includes paintings, while many products of the woodblock process are clearly not one with *ukiyo-e* in style, spirit or subject. If a style though, how are we to account for the marked differences in approaches to coloring, stylization vs. naturalism, and line qualities between (to give even a focused example) the Torii, Katsukawa and Utagawa Schools in actor depiction—let alone more extreme contrasts from Moronobu to Kunichika? And if we take *ukiyo-e* as defining a subject matter, as might seem most natural from its name, does “floating world” indicate specific physical places (the theater and courtesan districts), or a sensual, present-world, pleasure-loving mentality in general? It would have to be the latter if the wider variety of printed products (toys, games, scandal sheets, fans) were to be included. But what then would become of Chinese-influenced bird-and-flower subjects by *ukiyo-e* artists, let alone landscape, historical and warrior prints? And what about images of courtesans and pleasurable activities in notably different styles, such as early Edo genre paintings or later Shijō-Kishi prints? Would these then have to be called *ukiyo-e*, just as the term is sometimes used in modern Japan to indicate erotic images, regardless of technique, style or place of origin? Unfortunately, although none of these criteria are individually sufficient, each of them has come singly to the fore in different cases in defining or rejecting works as *ukiyo-e*. Some woodblock prints are included simply because they are prints (pictorial talismans, for example (such as *aka-e of Shoki*), which have nothing to do with the “floating world” in subject or style), others with the right subject matter rejected because they are not stylistically appropriate, such as Shijō book prints. Style trumps subject, similarly, in including the wide variety of works by an artist like Hokusai as “floating world pictures,” while medium wins out in the general definition of surimono as part of *ukiyo-e*, despite the broad variety of artistic styles and subjects it includes. One might thus be tempted to define *ukiyo-e* as “pictures for a floating world audience,” which would include a wider range of materials, but on the false suppositions that this audience is definable, that we know its tastes, and that its tastes were for these products, and not others—belied by the wide stylistic variety of popular pictorial art in book form (Kanō, Tosa, Nanga etc.) that simply cannot be counted as *ukiyo-e* (but that has, ironically, on the ground of medium, at times been included). Seemingly, the only consistent method for identifying *ukiyo-e*, then, without radically redefining it (rejecting those pieces already assumed to be part of the movement or including others now excluded from it), would be by *lineage*, calling *all* of the pictures made by artists of those schools involved primarily in the production of prints and paintings of the pleasure-loving urban scene (actors and courtesans) *ukiyo-e*, even when the full range of pictorial subject strays to some extent from this central, defining subject matter. But this definition obscures the variety of purposes in Japanese woodblock prints, assuming that all were made as pictorial art, which distorts the true functions of woodblock printing as a mode of mass communication and a commercial medium, to which pictures are allied as a supplement. For this reason, I prefer to discuss “Japanese woodblock printing,” rather than the art-laden *ukiyo-e*, although the term is unavoidable in discussing historical treatments of surimono.

glowing terms, as in this passage by one of the self-proclaimed pioneers in the recognition of Japanese art, Edmond de Goncourt:

Surimono are soft prints, the color and line of which are gently absorbed into the silk of Japanese paper, images delicately muted, subdued, and nuanced with coloring as subtle as barely-tinted clouds made by a color-charged brush dipped in a tumbler of water. The silkiness of the paper, the quality of the colors, the care given to the printing, the highlights of gold and silver and still more, the embossed effect—made, it is said, by the bare elbow of the printer pressed into the paper—are quite different from the printing techniques of all other civilizations.¹¹⁵

The correspondingly high demand for surimono outside of Japan is apparent not only in turn-of-the-century auction catalogues, but also in the several sets of facsimile surimono reproductions for souvenir and export that were produced from the end of the 1880s through the 1890s, and had wrappers in foreign languages.¹¹⁶ The contents of these reproductions, as Roger Keyes has analyzed by quantitative comparison to both period Japanese albums and patterns of European collecting, also suggests sale to foreigners, with an emphasis on animals and still life, a reduction of warriors and Chinese themes, and the complete elimination of kabuki.¹¹⁷ Moreover, the nature of these “reproductions,” which include a number of designs that were never on surimono at all, but made for commercial prints and reformatted in the square,

¹¹⁵ Goncourt’s text is translated in full in Forrer’s *Hokusai* (New York: Rizzoli, 1988). This famous lyrical description of surimono, along with the translation of an announcement surimono, appears there on page 56.

¹¹⁶ Keyes (1985), 509. Keyes, following an inscription on one set, suggests an 1891 date for the initial “A copies,” but as several of these have been found in Hayashi Tadamasa’s surimono album compiled by 1889, a slightly earlier date must be considered. These prints have been at times called “*Akashi-ban*,” and the seal of an Akashi publisher on one print led Keyes to postulate that the “A Group” were produced at Akashi (near Kobe). In private correspondence with Scott Johnson, however, I have learned that Sekigawa Tōru, whose collection and private findings provided a foundation for Keyes’ essay, believes the Akashi attribution apocryphal, and logically not very likely if the prints were made for export by someone who knew the tastes of foreigners. Scott Johnson has privately suggested that a publisher such as Kobayashi Bunshichi would be a much more likely possibility, and Ōsaka, where the best printers and carvers resided, a far more probable place for production.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 510. Commercial motives were certainly primary in the selections of subject, but it is also interesting to examine the kind of “Japan” the merchants behind these sets chose to project to foreigners, one largely eliminated, for example, of China, war, and a “low” cultural form like kabuki.

shikishi-ban format to appear as surimono, suggests the free manner with which surimono were at this time mixed in with commercial prints as equally representative “pictures of the floating world” (*ukiyo-e*). Nor is it surprising, for reasons to be explored shortly, that these “reproductions” felt free to alter or to do away with some or even all of the poems on the sheets, to make them more agreeable to Western audiences.

Because of the high degree of interest in them, almost all of the early European studies of “Japanese art” describe surimono, distinguishing them from commercial prints, while always yet including them within the field of *ukiyo-e*. The manners by which they did so are quite various, however, resulting in different nuances of genre definition. One of the earliest and most perceptive descriptions of surimono comes poignantly at the very close of Louis Gonse’s *L’Art Japonais* of 1883. He writes:

Surimono are among the most seductive marvels of Japanese art. The problems that they solve are so far beyond what has been assayed in comparable productions elsewhere that no comparison can be sustained. The subjects of these prints, meant for a refined public, are of a subtle, imaginative kind. We are watching a duel between grace and wit, ingenuity and poetic feeling, engaged in by a people of taste.¹¹⁸

There are several remarkable points in Gonse’s depiction of surimono, clearly based on nineteenth century Edo pieces. First, although not entirely evident what he means by “comparable productions,” it is notable that he distinguishes surimono from the bulk of *ukiyo-e* by *content*, describing surimono with a list of traits often reserved for literary productions. Gonse is thus one of the few early commentators on surimono to actually mention a relationship with poetry—though here it is “poetic feeling”—and to describe one of the key characteristics of surimono as wit.¹¹⁹ He cannot simply mean

¹¹⁸ Translation from Bowie, *Art of Surimono*, (University of Indiana, 1979), 7.

¹¹⁹ The only other prominent mention of poetry in early accounts is found in P. Burty’s “La Poterie au Japon” in Bing’s *Le Japon Artistique* No. 18 (Oct. 1889), 80. Burty defines surimono as “the result of

surimono imagery, however, which seldom has the direct humor of works like the *Hokusai Manga* (北斎漫画), so enormously popular in Europe at this time, so it is almost certain that he is conveying something of what he has learned about surimono texts, and/or text-image relationships.¹²⁰ It will be decades before Gonse's unique emphasis on wit and poetry become standard points of surimono description again, so his emphasis is worth noting.

A far more common way of including surimono as one branch of *ukiyo-e* was to emphasize their nature as “deluxe versions of popular prints,” privately produced as gifts for an audience of friends. For Theodore Duret, for example, writing in 1889, surimono represented a particular *approach* to printmaking, and were precisely the antidote (or counter-reaction) to the general decline in the quality of commercial prints in the nineteenth century:

Whilst larger coloured prints were losing some of their refinement, another species full of delicacy arose and developed itself. I allude to those refined compositions called surimono, of which artists, in the earlier half of this century, produced a very small number of proofs, and which they gave to their friends or distributed among the members of the little tea-drinking societies on the occasion of certain fetes and anniversaries. Printed in the most careful way, first in quiet and subdued tones, and later with metallic luster added, these surimono were unequalled and unique in the annals of the printer's art.¹²¹

Duret's perception that surimono were inversely related to commercial prints in terms of quality has been picked up by later writers, some of whom suggest artistic decline and censorship in commercial prints as motivations for the rise of surimono,¹²² and

an admirable collaboration between poets and popular painters...” adding that “the compositions are almost always accompanied by verses and the text mixes picturesquely with the illustration.”

¹²⁰ Gonse was aided by Wakai Kenzaburo, one of the first expatriate dealers in Paris, in the creation of his book. See Max Putt, *Plunder and Pleasure* (Leiden: Hotei Publishing, 2003) 69 (n.63).

¹²¹ “The Art of Engraving in Japan,” in S. Bing Ed. *Artistic Japan: A Monthly Illustrated Journal of Arts and Industries*, No. 7 (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1889), 78.

¹²² One means of placing *kyōka* surimono in clear relation to *ukiyo-e* history is to examine how the surimono genre took off in “deluxe” effects and ostentation at exactly that time in which government edicts were prohibiting them in commercial prints. Surimono, from this point of view, can be seen as the expression of ostentatious wealth gone underground, in privately printed and distributed works.

most of whom stress the deluxe nature of surimono as a quality that distinguishes them from the bulk of commercial prints. This focus, seen also in the Goncourt passage above, is readily understood if we place ourselves in the position of early commentators, knowing little about the context and function of surimono (as Duret's "little tea-drinking societies" reveals), but examining only their surface features to distinguish them from (while always relating them to) *ukiyo-e* commercial prints.

This emphasis on physical qualities alone is apparent in the third way that surimono were figured in relation to *ukiyo-e*. With W. von Seidlitz, writing in 1897, surimono are introduced as a *format* of *ukiyo-e*, square surimono (the vast majority of *kyōka* pieces from the 1810s) joining single sheet prints, triptychs and *kakemono* as the four formal types of *ukiyo-e*. Seidlitz did, however, add that surimono were a format with a special function (exchanged by "art-lovers" as New Year greetings, congratulations or announcements) and of a "luxurious" nature.¹²³ This rather inane focus on paper size and configuration as a means for categorizing prints was nonetheless highly influential—for Seidlitz's book was translated into multiple languages and ran through many editions—and can be seen in the terminology of many early auction catalogues, as well as later studies. Its influence is evident, for example, in Basil Stewart's 1922 analysis of *ukiyo-e*, in which Stewart groups surimono together with fan prints as special formats with extra-artistic uses, but that nonetheless partake of the full variety of subjects that appear within commercial prints.¹²⁴ In these views, surimono are scarcely distinguished from mass-market prints at all, being

See, for example, Kobayashi Fumiko (in Carpenter, Ed. (2005), 173-4) who argues that the rise of New Year surimono series is related to the prohibition on color printed books in 1804.

¹²³ *A History of Japanese Colour Prints*. (Philadelphia: Lippincott Company, 1925 [originally published in German in 1897]), 16.

¹²⁴ *Subjects Portrayed in Japanese Colour Prints* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. 1922), 75-76. This is a virtually meaningless distinction, as any number of formats could be described this way.

posited as parallel in nature with a commercial form like the fan print, just one of many standard formats a printmaker/artist had available to choose from.

In fact, this erasure of the distinctions between surimono and commercial *ukiyo-e* is the final result of most attempts at relating the forms. A fourth method, which arrived at the very same end, was to define surimono as simply a privately commissioned version of *ukiyo-e*. This schema emphasized the unique *production style* of a surimono, but rarely examined its full effects or motivations, merely circling back to the luxurious printing typically ordered for these special gifts. The question of *thematic content* is carefully avoided here, leaving the reader under the impression that the subjects of surimono were the same as those of commercial prints, a point that Stewart alone explicitly—albeit erroneously—states. Nor are the motivations inspiring the creation and form of these prints examined in more than the most superficial way. Thus, as in Duret's account, surimono, according to this emphasis, become essentially nothing more than deluxe versions of commercial woodblock prints, private printing being merely the explanation for their lavishness.

This type of analysis can be seen in the definition of surimono given in Arthur Davison Ficke's Chats on Japanese Prints of 1915, which, however, turns the tables on previous evaluation by presenting a pragmatic and moralistic American critique of French exuberance for the "deluxe":

The surimono was a type of print not sold in the market; it was made upon special order of private individuals....it displayed the utmost complexity of the technique of colour-printing. The number of blocks was lavishly multiplied; the most subtle gradations of colour were contrived; and the effect was heightened by every variety of *gauffrage*, gold, silver and bronze powders, and mother-of-pearl dust. Yet in spite of all this effort, the surimono is, in the opinion of many collectors, not as a rule very important as a work of art. In the ordinary surimono the medium employed has outstripped the motive expressed, and what should have been the means has become the sole end.¹²⁵

¹²⁵ London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1915, 373.

In this discussion of means and ends, printing technique and artistic subject, Ficke denigrates surimono as superficial (emphasizing craft rather than art, pictorial surface over thematic depth) and thus aesthetically inferior in relation to other *ukiyo-e*. But Ficke's connoisseurial judgment implicitly assumes that surimono and *ukiyo-e* have the same ends, that is to say, the same subjects and aims of expression. Thus, while distinguishing surimono from other prints aesthetically, he implicitly makes surimono one with *ukiyo-e* in nature and goal, never questioning whether deluxe printing might serve a different purpose, or be uniquely related to the nature of the subjects (courtly themes, etc.) that surimono present, let alone a function other than pictorial art.

A fifth manner by which surimono could be placed as a subcategory of *ukiyo-e*, suggested already in Seidlitz's account, was, however, by *function*. This emphasis on function takes us out of the realm of the purely visible (though the physical features of a surimono can be explained by it) and into the dimension of historical and social contexts. It promises a deeper understanding not only of the art, but also of the role of that art in relation to society, its makers and their motivations. For this reason, an analysis of function had the potential to challenge contemporary views of the nature of Japanese prints, and ultimately the view of art in general, to complicate the manner in which prints were seen so that they could not slip so neatly into European assumptions about art and the artist. And perhaps for this reason too, the analysis of function was one the early commentators backed away from, retreating in this area to the safety of a few pat phrases and characterizations of surimono as "social cards." As the reasons for the physical distinctions between surimono and commercial *ukiyo-e* became increasingly clear, function was a thorny question that could not be avoided. It was, however, one that could be defused.

Significantly, when it came to descriptions of function (or even, amazingly, physical content), the topic of poetry was ignored, scrupulously avoided, or brushed over quickly as a secondary feature, and the characterization of surimono as “announcement or greeting cards” pushed to the fore. It is simply astounding to go through account after account defining the nature of surimono, and time and again find no mention of poetry. One might be tempted to believe that Europeans were simply incapable of seeing the texts, or recognizing them as poetry, though this was explicitly not the case, as excerpts to come will show. Despite the existence of earlier texts that described the role of poetry in surimono creation, most writers into the teens and twenties continued to define surimono as greeting cards, ignoring poetry entirely. Ficke, in the line in ellipses in his 1915 quote above, clarifies that surimono were “for use as a festival greeting, an invitation, a congratulatory memorial, or an announcement.”¹²⁶ Basil Stewart states, “what they [surimono] were will be best indicated by saying that they were nothing so much as our Christmas, New Year or Birthday, or other form of greeting card, while the designs on them were as diverse.”¹²⁷ Following the direction of this scholarship, the few short articles on surimono in American magazines and museum bulletins in this period took titles (and focus) like “Surimono—The New Year’s Cards of Japan,” “Japanese New Year’s Cards” and “Surimono, the Social Cards of Old Japan.”¹²⁸ Although this characterization provided opportunity for some seasonally relevant January issues, what was really at stake here was something much more, as the persistence of this mode of definition beyond early commentators, even to the present day, suggests.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Ficke (1915), 373.

¹²⁷ *Subjects Portrayed in Japanese Colour Prints* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Trubner, 1922), 75

¹²⁸ *House and Garden*, (January 1917) 20-21; *International Studio*, (January 1924) 27-84; *Boston Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* (October 1922) 62-63.

¹²⁹ The persistence of this mode of surimono definition, which limits the form to comparison with a familiar, western phenomenon, can be seen most dramatically in Asano Shūgō’s essay in Gian Carlo Calza (ed.) *Ukiyo-e* (New York: Rizzoli, 2005), in which Asano—quite stunningly considering his

The continued refusal to admit poetry as the central motivating element in surimono, despite evidence suggesting as much, reveals the vital importance of the segregation of text and image, the literary and visual arts, in European ideology. What was at risk by allowing poetry in was the very definition of surimono as “art,” which, in the early modern European context, explicitly could not include a literary text. To maintain surimono as works of art therefore, it was necessary to bracket off and/or explain away the existence of poetry on these prints.

This tension is palpable in the chapter Edward Strange devotes to surimono in his 1904 Japanese Colour Prints, which is comparatively vocal on the topic of poetry, with two brief mentions.¹³⁰ Strange begins his account as follows:

The Japanese of the lower social orders have had for many years the pleasant custom of commemorating special events by sending to friends a certain kind of small print, wrought with special care, and generally inscribed with an appropriate poem. They are printed in colours by the same process as the ordinary colour prints, of which they are indeed but a refined development.¹³¹

The place of poetry is first embedded within a larger function, and made to be “appropriate” to the occasion that Strange posits as the true purpose of surimono.

involvement with surimono outside of the *ukiyo-e* tradition—identifies surimono as “greeting cards” and one of the three formats (with *ichimai-e* and *hanbon*) of *ukiyo-e*. It is worth noting that Asano’s identification of surimono as greeting cards is utilized precisely to retain surimono as a sub-category of *ukiyo-e*, exactly as in the nineteenth century. Essentially, by giving surimono a purpose other than poetry presentation, and one with a light, social meaning, emphasizing the non-aesthetic nature of the texts through a false comparison, Asano retains the pictorial part of surimono as what really counts, making texts seem inconsequential. Asano had already explicitly stated his desire to emphasize picture in his surimono exhibition (1997, 5), but the works presented (particularly early surimono) served to undercut that statement meaningfully. By reviving an old structure for considering *ukiyo-e*, however, albeit based on new criteria (divisions in the publishing industry) he manages to downplay texts and calligraphy without ever explicitly saying so. The comparison of surimono to *nengajō* (contemporary New Year greeting cards), lightly made by Kira Sueo in *Haisho no hanashi* (Tōkyō: Seishōdō Shoten, 1989), 46, can also serve a similar function, by subordinating poetry to occasion and social function.

¹³⁰ Strange, working at the more craft and historically oriented South Kensington Museum (as opposed to the “fine art” and aesthetically oriented British Museum) tended to approach surimono (and Japanese prints in general) with a more objective, comprehensive vision, without the exclusivity of connoisseurship. For this tendency, he was lambasted by writers like Von Seidlitz, who found the equal time he gave to nineteenth century prints appalling, and accused him of a deficiency of “artistic values,” “seriousness and love of his subject.” For a more thorough analysis of this conflict in points of view, see Allen Hockley, The Prints of Isoda Koryūsai (University of Washington, 2003) 22-24.

¹³¹ (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1904) 109.

After the word poetry is released, he immediately ties surimono back into the main body of *ukiyo-e* printmaking, emphasizing technique, which for the Europeans at this time meant virtually the same thing as artistic genre, woodblock printing equaling *ukiyo-e*. Surimono, Strange states, are simply a deluxe version of “ordinary colour prints,” fundamentally one with them in nature. He does, however, advance discourse on surimono somewhat by noting a “difference of plan [layout]” between commercial prints and surimono, with the picture filling the whole of the former, whereas in the latter “the accompanying text [has] a value too great to permit of that.”¹³² He thus notes that: “what is essential [in surimono] is that symbolism shall be supreme,” but once more encompasses surimono’s symbolic language under seasonal (not poetic) impetus by adding “and thoroughly suited to the occasion.”¹³³

Strange elaborates the functions of surimono on the following page, again mentioning—while burying—poetry, this time within a list of other uses. But Strange’s description of the commissioning of surimono by poetry clubs is uncannily accurate, and reveals that this piece of information was available by 1904.¹³⁴

But surimono were made for other purposes than the adornment of festivals. Many have been brought into being by specially successful meetings of clubs of artisans or tradesmen, at which the competitive making of poems was the attraction. Others, again, notify the birth of a son, a marriage, the retirement of a man into a Buddhist temple, or one of the many changes of name in which a Japanese actor, artist, or poet indulges.¹³⁵

¹³² Ibid. Notice here that text and image are assumed to be competing, rather than complementary forces.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Indeed, Justus Brinckmann had written of clubs’ role in the creation of surimono as early as his 1889 *Kunst und Handwerk in Japan*, a passage which Seidlitz quoted in his study, even repeating *verbatim* Brinckmann’s mistaken attribution of a set of the Seven Gods. But Brinckmann, despite being the author of a simultaneously released essay on Japanese poetry (“La Tradition Poétique Dans L’Art au Japon,” published in Bing’s *Le Japon Artistique* No. 19 (Nov. 1889), 87) wrote here only of “art clubs and other societies” (“Kunstlervereine und andere Gesellschaften”) never directly mentioning poetry. See 292 of this work, and 16-17 of Seidlitz.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 110.

Although my focus in this dissertation, as I have described, is on surimono as poetry presentation sheets, I do not wish to suggest that Strange and others are factually wrong in elaborating the many uses of surimono, which *did in part* function as announcement and greeting cards. But any objective look at extant surimono will reveal that, conservatively, 95% of them are associated with poetry clubs and their members, and of the remaining 5%, many contain poetry in addition to announcements. More importantly, I mean to shift the emphasis: it was not the practice of sending greeting cards that brought into being poetry to accompany them, but the practice of poetry that brought into being the greeting cards, taking advantage of the occasion. This fact is especially evident with New Year's cards—the vast majority of surimono—that in nineteenth century Edo practice were often made as the result of poetry competitions (*uta-awase*, particularly the so-called *saitanbiraki*). The greeting aspect itself, though not to be ignored as symbolic gesture, with ritual connotations and history, was itself rote, and the content of the card, not its existence, the focus. Announcement surimono, likewise, were a kind of self-promotion, for which poetry was not only made to be “appropriate,” as Strange would have it, but to show off the qualities of the sender, which was in fact the very purpose of the piece. The card, therefore, is not the occasion for its poetry; but rather, poetry is the occasion for the card. Or, to relate this argument to structure and content, poets did not simply select a suitable seasonal symbol as an end unto itself on their surimono, but rather took these seasonal references as their body of material, then selected from it and arranged their choices according to the approach, ideals and techniques of their poetry. Occasion, one might thus say, was made appropriate to poetry, and not vice-versa. It is this factor that makes New Year surimono seasonal poetic presentations, and not simply greeting cards.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Some persistence of this mode of definition by function can be seen in Roger Keyes, who divides

Strange's commentary on the role of poetry clubs in the often reprinted Japanese Colour Prints gives later writers—including himself in the poetry-vacant surimono chapter of his 1906 Hokusai—no excuse for ignoring the presence of poetry on surimono. It could be argued, however, that even were he and others able to acknowledge the poetry and its importance, there was very little they could *do* with it, which was surely not an incentive to emphasize poetry as primary. Yet, in actuality, this was not the case. Edmond de Goncourt, whose attraction to surimono led him to posit the designer Gakutei as one of the five great Japanese artists he wished to study,¹³⁷ spends page after page describing individual surimono in his detailed 1896 monograph Hokousai, but never once in all of this so much as mentions poetry. He does, however, give the complete translation of the text on an announcement surimono, a rather vapid but genteel invitation to a musical concert in celebration of a name change, as well as the translations of series titles, and of Hokusai's varied signatures on surimono.¹³⁸ Furthermore, aided by Hayashi Tadamasa¹³⁹, he provides lengthy translations of Hokusai's book prefaces, letters and selections from his fiction. Pertaining to other genres, he adds the phrase "Illustrated by Poems" [sic] to a book title, and identifies the poetic sources for Hokusai's commercial series "The One Hundred Poems Explained by a Wet-Nurse" (which does not actually contain poetry on the prints). Therefore, not only is it impossible to conceive that Goncourt was

surimono into "announcement" and "poetry" pieces as "two different types of privately distributed Japanese woodblock print" (1984, 11 and 1985, 13, from which this quote derives.) Although not strictly wrong as an overview of extant works, this unqualified division takes into account neither chronology nor proportion, as poetic surimono both greatly precede and vastly outnumber announcement pieces. My own definition of surimono as poetic presentation sheets, deriving from a strict chronological view that considers as central the historical circumstances that gave birth to the form, can only admit announcement pieces as a secondary or branch genre, certainly related to the ritual functions of *kissho* that surimono took on, but not to the other, poetic factors that gave surimono its unique form and method of production, only later appropriated by non-poetic announcement pieces.

¹³⁷ From an 1889 entry in Goncourt's private journal. See Becker and Philips (1971), and also Mirviss (2000), 27.

¹³⁸ Goncourt in Matthi Forrer, Hokusai (New York: Rizzoli, 1988), 56.

¹³⁹ Goncourt does not explicitly credit Hayashi for all of the translation work, but his name is several times mentioned as the authority in the text. See, for example, Forrer (1988), 186.

unaware that the vast majority of surimono he described were inscribed with poetry, but, moreover, he had the means at his side to have some of these poems translated. Why then did he not do so?

One might be tempted to think that the avoidance of poetry in relation to surimono, not only by Goncourt but so many of the writers preceding and following him, resulted from a desire to retain mastery over the field of the woodblock print, which could be jeopardized by difficult textual references and obscure associations to things which seemingly could not be understood. There persists in the art world today, in fact, a general understanding that surimono are impossibly complex, as in this comment by Joan Mirviss in the introduction to a Tōkyō exhibition of surimono in the year 2000:

Nearly all western viewers, and even most modern Japanese readers, cannot discern the many layered interpretations of an individual surimono because of the difficulties inherent in deciphering the texts. While this has generally not bothered foreign enthusiasts, the intentionally complicated and often cryptic poetry seems to have dampened Japanese enthusiasm for surimono.¹⁴⁰

While it is true that some surimono associations can be hard to capture, particularly personal references and inside jokes, if Hayashi was capable of tackling Edo prefaces, he was certainly up to the challenge of providing at least a sample surimono poetic text, just as he had for an announcement surimono. The orthography was not a problem for him, and though the interpretation of *kyōka* does require a recognition of wordplay and allusion that can be tricky to explain and translate, the repetitious

¹⁴⁰ 24. I would add that the lack of Japanese interest in surimono is less due to cryptic poetry—some *kyōka* poems on surimono being easily understood—than to the resistance, imported from the west, to deal with poetry in the same context as works of fine art, together with a desire to retain the romanticized individual artist-genius at the center, unchallenged by other creative forces. This latter point holds true of *ukiyo-e* studies in general, with little attention given to the roles of publishers, carvers and printers in determining the exact content of the final work. Absurdly, authors often proceed with an assumption that the designing artist was working free from commercial forces and the group nature of production (or the commissioning poets in the case of surimono).

language and conceits of these texts on surimono would have made at least some easy going for him. Moreover, though Goncourt's quite incredible study was absolutely an effort to show his mastery over the field of the woodblock print, this attempt was explicitly linked to his presentation of difficult texts, and at moments he even downplays the role of the translator to relate stories as though he had read them himself.¹⁴¹ The desire to maintain control, therefore, could not have been the reason he failed to make poetry on surimono one of his areas of inquiry. In fact, the inclusion of translations would only have enhanced the image of mastery he sought.

Should we therefore seek the failure to mention surimono poetry with Hayashi? For if Goncourt was the one who ultimately decided that *kyōka* poetry would not or should not have a part in his project, on what basis could he possibly have made this determination? With little knowledge of Japanese, he would have had to rely on Hayashi to report the contents and importance of the poems. What could Hayashi have said? Was he afraid that were he to elucidate the complexities of one poem for Goncourt he would have to do them all? Did he, like most literate Japanese of the time, dismiss *kyōka* as a base and unimportant form? Was he worried about the economic consequences of de-romanticizing surimono for his customers? But no matter what Hayashi related, Goncourt, who was ever-willing to challenge traditional views, both Japanese and Western, and whose curiosity led him to want to know all of the small details of Hokusai's life and work, appears to have accepted his judgment without much question. And it was Goncourt who chose not to so much as even mention poetry in connection with surimono in his work. It seems necessary then to

¹⁴¹ The Goncourts took great pride in their role as interpreters of Japanese art, even presenting themselves in their published Journal as the first to have "discovered" it, twisting certain dates to support their claim (see Schwartz, *The Far East in Modern French Literature*). But it must be admitted that, with Hayashi's help, the Utamaro and Hokusai books far outstrip anything of the period in their detail, and remained influential well into the twentieth century.

analyze this failure of their work to adequately discuss surimono from both sides of the so-called “cultural divide.”

A hint of what might have passed in the exchange I have imagined between Goncourt and Hayashi appears in a remarkable passage on page 54 of their Hokousai.¹⁴² A section from one of the master’s early *kibyōshi* is translated, but abruptly, in the midst of narration, trails off into ellipses. This rupture is immediately explained:

Here the translator [Hayashi] stopped, declaring that from start to finish the text is made up of puns and allusions that only the Japanese can understand, and that it is untranslatable.

It is far from a stretch to believe that with *kyōka*, also “puns and allusions” “from start to finish,” Hayashi’s reaction must have been exactly the same. But noteworthy is the manner in which Hayashi relates his failure of translation, positing the text, which “only the Japanese can understand,” as one which resists Goncourt’s efforts to enter and master it. There are three points to be made here. First, Hayashi, and Goncourt with him, has a view of language that asserts its transparency; Hayashi does not attempt to *explain* the text, to describe the double meanings, outside references and jokes, and Goncourt does not press him to make these efforts. Language that does not directly refer to things, but loops, doubles, overlaps itself and connects to other sources intertextually is therefore “untranslatable.” By this standard, *kyōka* would clearly also have been untenable. Next, the ability to understand such a text, and therefore, to penetrate completely into the nature of “Japan” and “Japanese art” is posited as national. Here we sense a moment of Hayashi’s resistance to Goncourt’s project, rebuffing of his attempt to master all aspects of his subject. The intricacies of Japan are posited by Hayashi as something only the Japanese can understand. Finally,

¹⁴² Forrer (1988) 84.

Goncourt not only accepts Hayashi's statement, but even reproduces it verbatim in his text. He does not edit out the episode or the partial translation, but pointedly includes it as a valuable sign of the difficulties of his work, and of the impenetrable complexities of "Japan." Goncourt, this passage shows, is willing to admit a degree of failure, to introduce a kernel of mystery, an unfathomable node, in his object, that retains Japan's position as the tantalizing other.

But this raises a new question: why wasn't the "otherness" of *kyōka* introduced in the same way? Why is Goncourt completely silent on the subject of surimono poetry? Of what does this silence speak? Once again, I argue here for suppression rather than ignorance; Goncourt must have been aware—unless the fact was suppressed for him by Hayashi, but this is not likely—that most writings on surimono were poetic, and not in actuality covered by Hayashi's Victorian-style translation of an invitation. But Goncourt nevertheless allows this vapid content to stand as representative of all surimono texts.¹⁴³ And by doing so, he effectively makes surimono texts invisible—inconsequential, so not worthy of further examination. The effect of this one translation is negative, telling us what is there for the sole purpose of telling us what's not, which is pertinent content. Therefore, no more translation is necessary: texts, unrelated to images, can be bracketed off and the images made central. The "foreign"—in several senses—element is thus removed from the picture, which is thereby made pure and immediately available to visual perception, without the disturbance of language. Goncourt thus ultimately makes surimono fit into the Western conception of the work of pictorial art, from whose plane language (and

¹⁴³ The translation in question reads: "In spite of the great heat, I hope you are in good health and I wish to inform you that my name has changed, thanks to my public success and that, to celebrate the inauguration of my new name, on the fourth of the next month I am organizing a concert at the home of Kyōya of Ryōgoku, with the participation of all of my pupils, a concert held from ten in the morning to four in the afternoon, and that, in rain or sunshine, I am counting on the honor of your visit." (56)

especially poetry) must be expelled as an agent of interference, an alternately functioning signifying system that blocks the immediate visual operation of imagery.

But why should a visual work be perceived as something less than fine art for its inclusion of text? According to Naoki Sakai, “from the renaissance until recently, a radical separation between the visual and the verbal has been sanctified in the so-called West.” Sakai continues:

A visual work has been evaluated exclusively in terms of its capacity to appeal to the eye; any verbal element within it has been rejected and excluded, as an unnecessary impurity....The co-presence of visual and verbal elements within the same space of a work has implied either vulgarity or incompleteness...¹⁴⁴

Looking for historical examples of this principle, we can find it nowhere more explicitly stated than in G.E. Lessing’s Laocoon of 1766:

Painting and poetry should be like two just and friendly neighbors, neither of whom indeed is allowed to take unseemly liberties in the heart of the other’s domain, but who exercise mutual forbearance on the borders, and effect a peaceful settlement for all the petty encroachments which circumstances may compel...¹⁴⁵

Lessing’s language is suggestive of the importance of clear geographic divisions in the development of the modern nation state, for which the separation of citizen and foreigner is the very basis of national unity and identification. Following this and other leads, W.J.T. Mitchell has written at length on the ideologies of text-image segregation in European culture, finding it emblematic of other divisions—particularly class, race and gender—that are characterized and regulated in parallel terms.¹⁴⁶ For

¹⁴⁴ Voices of the Past: The Status of Language in Eighteenth Century Japanese Discourse (Cornell University, 1991) 116

¹⁴⁵ Laocoon, An Essay on the Limits of Poetry and Painting (1766), trans. By Ellen Frothingham (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969), 110

¹⁴⁶ Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology (University of Chicago, 1986). Mitchell also notes how images have been identified with both illiteracy—and hence with both the lower classes, and the savage—and with passivity and irrationality—and thus identified as “feminine.” Hybrid forms, like the mingling of classes or races, or gender-crossings, were deemed improper.

Goncourt to admit poetry, therefore, would be not only to endanger his placement of surimono as works of art, but also to destabilize borders, to admit that European appreciations must come through a consciousness shaped by Japanese poetic language and social practices, rather than the supposedly instantaneous language of the visual.

However, lest I overstate my case, it is important to mention those early writers who do deal with poetry on surimono—though highlighting these will only make the surrounding failures all the more astounding. I have already discussed Gonse, Burty and Strange, who dare at least to mention the word poetry. Frederick Gookin, whose writings were unfortunately never as widely reproduced as the other authors I have mentioned, was quite careful in his catalogues, when a surimono was not illustrated, to note the number or placement of poems, and sometimes even the names of the poets, their poetry clubs, and years of birth and death.¹⁴⁷ This tendency can be understood in light of comments he made on painting and poetry in a 1925 essay, “The Aesthetic Value of Far Eastern Art.” Gookin, though not stating such expressly, is clearly thinking of surimono in this passage (note the mention of *uguisu* and plum, ubiquitous in surimono as in no other category of Japanese art), a reference that will be made explicit when a version of this passage is applied directly to surimono by a later writer:

The poetic relations that find expression in paintings by Far Eastern artists are of many kinds....One of the common manifestations of this is shown in the putting together of naturally associated things, such, for instance, as plum blossoms and the *uguisu*....Even more common is the coupling of things related to one another in well known classic odes. So widely are many of these poems known that the faintest suggestion will often suffice to bring them to mind; to which it may be added that the more elusive the indication the greater is apt to be the pleasure that recognition brings. Historic events and legends are also called to mind in the same way.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ For example, see the Descriptive Catalogue of Japanese Colour Prints: The Collection of Alexander Mosle (Leipzig, 1927), 50-58

¹⁴⁸ *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, Second Series*, Vol.2 (Dec. 1925), 61. The later writer is Jack Hillier, whose 1960 ‘breakthrough’ passage on the nature of surimono, to be introduced shortly, follows Gookin’s too closely to be mere accident. Gookin also referred only to Japanese prints in

Also of interest is a 1927 catalogue for an exhibition of *egoyomi* and surimono, the very first of such in Japan, and in fact the only I have been able to find before the 1990s. The introduction by J.S. Happer follows the typical surimono definition that emphasizes size, private origin, and special materials and printing, but later in his description he also mentions poetry, stating, “Literary Clubs, whose members vied with each other in poesy, published the winning poems on Surimono, with illustration of the main themes.”¹⁴⁹ This was largely a point already made by Strange nearly a quarter century before, but so seldom repeated that the mere mention of it is significant. More noteworthy though is Happer’s choice of the word “illustration,” suggesting that the images followed the “main themes” of the poetry, and not the poetry that was “appropriate” (as Strange had it) for the occasion.

Of far more resounding note, however, was the publication of the Catalogue of Japanese and Chinese Woodcuts in the British Museum in 1916. Though the initial essay by Laurence Binyon makes no mention of surimono, the catalogue itself contains descriptions of dozens of surimono, with full translations of their poetic texts for the first time in any study.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, after the first surimono in the catalogue is introduced, the following definition is given:

Surimono means simply “printed thing,” but in practice is a term applied to a special kind of print. *In the surimono, the engraved text, usually a poem, was the essential part, to which the design was added as a harmonious decoration.*¹⁵¹

general, but must certainly have been thinking of surimono in particular, when he wrote these lines in an introduction to a 1908 exhibition of Japanese prints at the Art Institute of Chicago: “Literary men often saved those such as were inscribed with odes of especial merit, or had recondite meanings that appealed to them, and to their care we are indebted for the preservation of the majority of those that survived in perfect or nearly perfect condition.” (Quoted from Mirviss (1995), 26.

¹⁴⁹ *Egoyomi & Surimono: The 11th Semi-Annual Exhibition of the Ukiyo-e Society of Japan* (Tokyo, 1927). Joan Mirviss suggests, on the basis of an old photograph, that there may have been an earlier exhibition devoted largely to surimono in the U.S., at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1908 (Mirviss and Carpenter (1995), 10,26).

¹⁵⁰ (London: British Museum, 1916), 356-375. The translations are not accompanied by explanations.

¹⁵¹ 2, Italics mine. The print is mistakenly catalogued as by (rather than after) Moronobu, one of the pioneers of *ukiyo-e*, so is the third work described in the chronologically arranged catalogue, the first

The uniqueness of this definition, not only in relation to those preceding it, but also among those following for the next half-century, cannot be underestimated. Poetry—not the variety of announcement—is posited as the most common kind of text on surimono, and the centrality of this text is emphasized as being—at least originally—more important than the illustration. This breakthrough in the characterization of surimono is simply astounding, considering the opposing trend in the texts all around it. Unfortunately, “breakthrough” may be the wrong word, as this revelation of the essence of surimono practice remained as though an isolated discovery—in spite of the monumental and scholarly nature of the British Museum catalogue—in the writing of the next decades. Perhaps part of the reason for this failure of influence was the presentation of the catalogue itself, which merely dropped literal English translations into the print descriptions, with absolutely no effort at explaining the content, functioning or ideals of the poetry, thus making the poems still quite easy to dismiss.¹⁵² Thereafter, as Japan plunged into the darkness of the Pacific War, and the passion for Japanese prints cooled, little of importance was written on surimono in the West until the Japanese print renaissance in the 1950s.

I began my discussion of early writings on surimono with a claim that the underlying assumptions the writers of these accounts brought to their work formed paradigms that have controlled how surimono have been viewed ever since. Now, in order to trace these paradigms through to post-war and contemporary accounts of surimono, I must elaborate again exactly what they are. First, surimono are assumed

under Moronobu. In this position, this radical restatement of surimono’s nature and content, in such an authoritative source, could hardly be missed.

¹⁵² Compare, for example, 364, no.10 (“the door was opened and the dance of young girls entered, their hair smelling with sweet oil”) to a full description of the layers of puns and references in this verse, given in *Japanese Poetry Prints: Surimono from the Schoff Collection* (Ithaca: Johnson Museum of Art, 2006) 157. Without realizing that the open door refers to Amaterasu’s cave, and *kami* (hair) to the goddess (*kami*) herself, while the hair oil is a popular contemporary brand named “boulder door” and the immediate setting the Ise shrine (devoted to Amaterasu), the depth of this verse in its complex layering of past and present, high and low, cannot be appreciated.

to be, through their nature as woodblock prints, part of the artistic practice called “*ukiyo-e*.” It is assumed that the woodblock printing of images is an art form, not a technology of mass production, and that therefore *ukiyo-e* picture making and the creation of surimono are part of the same project, with identical goals (decorative art). Surimono are distinguished from commercial *ukiyo-e* in various manners, based on content, approach, format, production or function, but always placed as part of the field of *ukiyo-e* thereby. Most typically, they are seen as “privately commissioned” or “deluxe” versions of commercial prints, made for a special purpose (as a social card), but in root essence one with commercial prints. To maintain this point of view (and also, circularly, because the *ukiyo-e* illustrated version of surimono was all that was capable of being seen), the history of surimono was left unexplored, with only limited interest in searching for the origins of the form.¹⁵³ For this reason too, poetry was typically bracketed, explained away, or simply ignored. The easiest way to reduce the importance of poetry was to stress surface characteristics or else the variety of surimono functions, and the purpose of surimono as greeting or announcement card was raised time and again as the essential nature of the form. Poetry here was made secondary to the social event, for which it was made to be suitable, with the “occasional” function of surimono as a poetry card buried in a list of other purposes, though these in truth comprised only a tiny minority of the genre. Through all of this, the literary aspects and function of surimono were sharply divided and kept separate from the pictorial element, and even in the breakthrough British Museum Catalogue there is no discussion at all of text-image relationships, and only superficial renderings of the poems. Maintaining the borders between art and literature was absolutely central for these early writers, and can be seen to regulate all manner of their

¹⁵³ Strange does quote the Katsukatsubō story, related previously in this chapter, but there is no attention paid here or elsewhere as to the *motivations* for the creation of the form.

approaches to the surimono form. Unfortunately, these tendencies were not simply a product of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but continued to dominate discourse on surimono, as I will show in the next section.

Toeing the Limits of the Paradigm: The Case of Jack Hillier

In the initial renaissance of American and European interest in the Japanese print, with a new admiration for “Japanese aesthetics” rising from the ashes of the Pacific War, it seemed once again that virtually anyone with writing ability, connections and some basic knowledge could expound their opinions on the subject. As in the late nineteenth century, it was primarily collectors, dealers, artists and literati who wrote the first Western language books on Japanese prints in the post-war period, including figures like Louis Ledoux,¹⁵⁴ Willy Boller,¹⁵⁵ James Michener,¹⁵⁶ Oliver Statler,¹⁵⁷ and Owen Holloway.¹⁵⁸ Shortly thereafter, in part as a reaction to a certain factual looseness inherent in this practice, the *ukiyo-e* print became an object for serious scholarship (rather than mere collector commentary) in the West, its study connected with departments of Japanese studies as they developed at major

¹⁵⁴ A businessman and poet, famous for his selective collecting, Ledoux (1902-1945) actually began self-publication of the five limited edition books on his collection during the war years, the last volume published posthumously in 1951.

¹⁵⁵ A German collector, Boller, like Ledoux, wrote a book on his own collection, published originally in German in 1947, an English translation in 1957.

¹⁵⁶ Novelist and self-made art critic, Michener was unquestionably the most influential figure in popularizing the Japanese print in postwar America. Michener’s books on prints are highly subjective, entertaining, but riddled with factual errors.

¹⁵⁷ Statler, who was stationed in Japan for four years during the occupation, became the leading voice in the introduction of the modern Japanese print in the 1950s and 60s.

¹⁵⁸ Holloway’s 1957 *Graphic Art of Japan: The Classical School* was unique in attacking the primacy of the *ukiyo-e* print, seeking to replace it on its pedestal with the creative efforts of Nanga, Kishi and Maruyama-Shijō artists in woodblock printed books. Although criticized harshly from all sides, Holloway’s polemic importantly established that the Japanese woodblock print is not synonymous with *ukiyo-e*, and that *ukiyo-e* was a “plebian,” commercial form, not as involved in the concerns of “high art” as what he (albeit erroneously) termed the “Classical School.” Holloway’s is thus an important advance in the critique of *ukiyo-e* treated as “art” in the westernized, romantic sense, but he retains the exalted status of art itself, merely shifting its content in line with his own interests and “higher” taste as connoisseur.

universities. Pioneering *ukiyo-e* scholars included Richard Lane, Rose Hempel, Howard Link and David Waterhouse, whose studies were now based not primarily on earlier, Western language writings, but on Japanese scholarship that had begun to flourish in the war and postwar years. Notable Japanese scholars of this period were Narazaki Muneshige, Yoshida Teruji, Fujikake Shizuya, Takahashi Seiichirō, Oka Isaburo, Shibui Kiyoshi, and, of later importance for the field of surimono, Suzuki Jūzō. Although their approach closely followed the paradigms for *ukiyo-e* studies established in late nineteenth century Europe, treating print designers as ‘artists’ in the Western sense of the term, and measuring prints against the standards of the work of art, these scholars were more capable of doing detailed research in matters of biography, lineage, chronology and iconography, advancing knowledge of *ukiyo-e* while eliminating many of the old myths that had been repeated ad infinitum without factual basis in previous studies.

Unfortunately, however, because these Japanese scholars without exception worked within romantic European models of art and the individual creative artist—accepting them as the very structure that gave their object of inquiry importance and international currency, and so never questioning their applicability to *ukiyo-e*—they were incapable of dealing with surimono as an individual genre.¹⁵⁹ Unlike most Europeans and Americans, they could not simply ignore or explain away the texts on surimono, reducing them to invisibility to allow the artwork to stand as the sole focus. While this awareness of text could have been an area of strength, potentially leading

¹⁵⁹ In relation to surimono, Suzuki, alone of the list of important Japanese *ukiyo-e* scholars above, approached this genre with interest and respect for its uniqueness. One of only two Japanese to participate in the International Surimono Society conference held in Tokyo in 1977, he published the essay he presented there on the characteristics of *kyōka* surimono in his 1979 *Ehon to Ukiyo-e*. More typical of the Japanese approach to surimono is Narazaki’s *Hokusai ron* (Atoriesha, 1944), which devotes approximately 20 pages (of 460) to short, descriptive chapters on surimono in relation to tracing the development of Hokusai’s style (see especially 151-61, 226-35). And this, in spite of the fact that surimono constitute an enormous part of Hokusai’s total output, perhaps as much as half or more of his single sheet designs. Nevertheless, these twenty pages are in fact more than other major Japanese scholars of the time gave to surimono, as necessitated by the subject of Narazaki’s study.

Japanese scholars to break out of traditional definitions of surimono as *ukiyo-e* and even of *ukiyo-e* as primarily an art form, ensconced within the European-crafted ideal of the pure artwork that gave meaning to their studies, surimono were an anomaly that threatened the very basis of their work. Surimono texts not only violated long-held European strictures concerning the mixture of word and image, but also overtly emphasized the group nature of the work and the importance of the commissioning poets, making it harder to assign artwork to the brilliance of individual genius. Finally, the small size of most surimono, though perfectly suited to their exchange function, was counted against this ‘category of *ukiyo-e*’ within the context of art, it being assumed that surimono was therefore some kind of trivial, ‘throw-off’ work for designers, who saved their major statements for the larger *oban*, the standard for commercial prints from the late 1780s. Thus Japanese scholars, subsuming surimono within *ukiyo-e*, and giving it only a marginal place even there, approached surimono largely for its documentary value, using these often precisely datable pieces to track name and signature changes, shifts in style and to identify the earliest works of certain artists.¹⁶⁰ Something of the Japanese attitude to surimono, which I will have opportunity to discuss in more detail in relation to Richard Lane, is suggested by the composition of the 16-volume *Ukiyo-e taikei*, which, among over 3500 plates, includes a grand total of 21 surimono.¹⁶¹ Token examples of surimono would also be

¹⁶⁰ One example of this practice, which drew the ire of the main protagonist of this section, Jack Hillier (for reasons, ironically, related more to “high art” than the under-evaluation of surimono) was in Shibui Kiyoshi’s *Utamaro*. Hillier, in his review of the book, suggested that Shibui was more interested in historical documentation than analysis of art, and criticized his choice of plates, including two “surimono” (more properly, *egoyomi*) miniatures, one quite damaged, introduced to represent Utamaro’s early work. See *Ukiyo-e Geijutsu* No. 5 (The Japan Ukiyo-e Society, 1964) and Shibui, Kiyoshi, *Utamaro* (NY: Crown Publishers, 1962) Plate 8.

¹⁶¹ *Ukiyo-e taikei* (Shūeisha, 1975). The 21 plates are in 2 volumes only, although more than half of the artists covered in the series did produce surimono. Volume 8, devoted to Hokusai and his followers, reproduces surimono on 3 of 75 color plates (4%) and 13 of 198 black and white plates (6.6%), despite the fact that Kubota Kazuhiro, “Katsushika Hokusai to Edo kyōka ren no kenkyū” (1995) suggests that Hokusai’s surimono were roughly equivalent to, and may even have outnumbered his commercial prints, while such was absolutely the case for his major disciples, Hokkei, Shinsai, Hokuba and Sōri III. A grand total of five surimono, one in color, appear in Volume 4, to represent the work of Shunman.

included in *ukiyo-e* exhibits, to suggest the variety of Japanese printmaking, but no exhibitions were exclusively devoted to this genre in Japan until well after they had occurred in Europe and America.¹⁶² Until the 1980s, in fact, far less was done to advance surimono studies in Japan than in the West, as Western scholarship continued to determine the paradigms for *ukiyo-e* studies.¹⁶³

In this scene of international post-war scholarship, the place of Jack Hillier (1912-1995) is unusual. Though Hillier, an artist and print collector with no Japanese language background, technically belongs in the list of dilettante writers, his powers of observation and analysis were keen, and his writing brilliantly insightful, disciplined and searching. Rarely did he pass on a piece of information that he couldn't verify with a scholar, nor was he content to repeat the descriptive platitudes about Japanese prints, instead seeking new ways of looking. Moreover, although not trained as a Japan scholar, Hillier was well versed in the critical language of art history, and his artist's eye and insight allowed him to present formal analysis of imagery that was direct and refreshing in its objectivity. His list of publications is impressive, and his name appears frequently in scholarly journals alongside those of Japanese specialists. Moreover, in the 1950s, when—due to aesthetic judgments like Ficke's on its relative merits—the genre of surimono was out of fashion, Hillier paid it an unusual amount of attention. His comments on—and struggles over—the proper presentation of surimono are extremely interesting in revealing the persistence of early paradigms in approaches to surimono and *ukiyo-e*.

Not one of the surimono of Toyokuni, Kunisada, Eisen, Kuniyoshi or Hiroshige is illustrated to represent these designers.

¹⁶² The first exhibition devoted exclusively to surimono took place in Rotterdam, as early as 1953, at the Museum Boymans. This was an isolated phenomenon, however, and the major Western exhibitions that altered the view of surimono in Japan did not occur until the late 1970s and mid 80s, presented by Eiko Kondō, Theodore Bowie and Roger Keyes.

¹⁶³ The state of Japanese scholarship on surimono, and its surprising lag behind Europe and America, is discussed briefly by Suzuki Jūzō in the 1984 *Edo-gaku jiten*.

Hillier, somewhat by accident, had a special relationship with surimono. In 1954, after the great response to his first general study, Japanese Masters of the Colour Print, Hillier was commissioned by Lord Chester Beatty to compile for his library a collection of Japanese prints and books. Beatty's stipulations, as Hillier recalls them, were that pieces be in pristine condition and under a certain price.¹⁶⁴ Given these two requirements, which greatly limited the possibilities for purchase, Hillier decided to concentrate on surimono, which were often found in mint condition, due to their placement in albums,¹⁶⁵ were of high aesthetic value, but nevertheless low priced, being out of favor with collectors. Hillier brought together nearly 500 surimono for Beatty's collection, which has been reproduced in full in Roger Keyes' two volume The Art of Surimono. Along the way, Hillier seems to have learned a great deal about the nature of these pieces, as comparison of his initial work with his writings of the early 1960s displays.

Hillier's definition of surimono in his 1954 Masters is for the most part formulaic, based on early European accounts of the sort already described. In the midst of a description of *ukiyo-e* format types, which follows and slightly elaborates on Seidlitz's categories, he writes:

Surimono, (literally 'printed things') were prints issued for some specific occasion, as New Year's greetings, to celebrate a birth or marriage, to commemorate a new membership to a poetry club, or or to give notice of an author's or artist's change of name, no rare event. They are usually of a small size and characterized by the extreme delicacy of the printing, the lavish use of metal dusts and *gauffrage*, and the welding of design and poetry into a decorative whole.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Hillier describes the terms of his employment with Beatty in Keyes (1985), 7-8

¹⁶⁵ As Gookin described above, many albums of surimono were put together by their original recipients, as these works served as personal memorials of friendships and shared events. Sadly, the majority of these albums, which offer invaluable clues to the relationships between poets and the chronology of certain works, have been broken up in the twentieth century by dealers, who could profit more from the sales of individual prints. Some major albums do remain intact however, in the Paris National Library, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Chiba Museum of Art, all of which have been the objects of major studies by Kondō (and later Asano), Mirviss and Keyes respectively.

¹⁶⁶ 1954, 16

Not surprisingly, function (as social cards), format and deluxe nature take precedence in Hillier's thoroughly traditional account, though it is noteworthy that he remarks on the unification of text and image as part of a totalized product. This description of the formal qualities of surimono thus, at least in this one aspect, surpasses the British Museum Catalogue, one of Hillier's main sources for describing surimono.¹⁶⁷

In Hillier's next major work, his Hokusai of 1956, he devotes the second chapter to "The Art of Surimono." There, while again defining the surimono primarily as a social card, he emphasizes that it is "accompanied as a rule by light verse," and notes that: "many surimono were designed for members of poetry clubs."¹⁶⁸ He also states a need to define surimono's "genesis," and without hesitation traces the form back to the 1765 *egoyomi* exchanges, not the first time this move had been made, but a more explicit account than most of *egoyomi* as the starting point of surimono.¹⁶⁹ He is also more historically minded in describing Hokusai's role in being "the first to put the privately-printed 'social-card' to wider use."¹⁷⁰ But the most interesting passage in Hillier's account comes when he looks at an individual surimono. Noting the complexities of associations in the piece, he remarks:

It will be evident from this specimen that properly to explain the manifold allusions and innuendoes of these prints would call for a book in itself, and the complete art of the surimono, consisting as it does in the marriage of the text and the design in an intricately veiled message, is bound to elude us.¹⁷¹

We shift with this passage from mastery to mystery, from the command of surimono as 'social cards', whose transient purposes are known and whose designs thus become

¹⁶⁷ He mentions this work as a reference in Hokusai (1956), 16 and A New Approach (1960), 142, 143

¹⁶⁸ 16, 22

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, Seidlitz had referenced Harunobu's 1765 calendar prints under "surimono" in his index, but did not use the term "surimono" directly in relation to them.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 17. Hillier, and Matthi Forrer after him, have a tendency to attribute to Hokusai's powers of innovation many of the traits established in earlier, *haikai*-based surimono, of which they remain ignorant.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 18

central, back to the nodal point of otherness I have described in connection with Goncourt and Hayashi. There is again a movement towards explicating, or at least suggesting, the fuller nature of the surimono poetry card, but an almost simultaneous drawing back from the consequences of that realization.

Like Strange, immediately after the mention of poetry, Hillier reverts in the next paragraph to a reaffirmation of the oneness of surimono and *ukiyo-e*, asserting unity through a statement of the most superficial distinctions:

surimono differed from the broadsheet in that it was invariably a private publication and not sold in the printshops. The number printed was probably far fewer than the broadsheet and great care was expended in the preparation of the print.¹⁷²

There is no attempt, whatsoever, to describe the *nature* of surimono as in any way differing from that of the commercial single sheet print, however. Rather, Hillier produces a new formulation, the surimono as a miniature version of the commercial woodblock:

Surimono are to the colour-printing art what netsuke are to sculpture; there is the same fusion of craftsmanship working with precious materials on a miniature scale, the same intent to surprise by the ingenuity in the choice of subject and the playfulness of the treatment.¹⁷³

“Surimono,” Hillier concludes, along the lines of Ficke, is a “‘mixed’ art,” and “no more than ‘quaint’” when examined strictly from a pictorial standpoint. “But seen as a whole, with its express intent in mind, it cannot fail to impress us as something highly civilized and sophisticated.”¹⁷⁴

Hillier’s own ‘mixed’ treatment of surimono in Hokusai, stretching, while still entirely bound in the old paradigms, sets up the adventure in his next book, the title of

¹⁷² Ibid, 22

¹⁷³ Ibid

¹⁷⁴ Ibid

which boldly announces its author as a revisionist: The Japanese Print: A New Approach. The “new approach” has been dismissed by at least one contemporary critic as the same old approach, merely applied to different, ‘minor’ artists who had previously been overlooked, but I would argue that there is much in Hillier’s book that is in fact new.¹⁷⁵ Pertaining to surimono, for example, in chapters on the designers Shunman and Hokkei, Hillier states, against the prevailing tendencies of Japanese scholarship, that surimono comprise a genre of some importance, and follows this assertion with a paragraph on *kyōka* poetry, one of the first times this word has actually appeared in connection with surimono in non-Japanese language works to this point. He then posits the motivation for the origin of surimono in two features of Tokugawa social life, the importance of the New Year and the creation of clubs for cultural pursuits, going so far as to state: “it is to the members of these clubs that the growth of the surimono as an art form can be ascribed.”¹⁷⁶ Then, after setting an entirely traditional arrangement on function, production, format and printing, he suddenly reaches out and wipes the table clear:

So much for the prevalence and scope of their use. What is of more interest to us is the intimate fusion of poem or announcement with the pictorial decoration.¹⁷⁷

There follows a remarkable elaboration on the various forms of text-image unification in Asia, including Chinese brush painting, *haikai* painting, and finally surimono. In stark contrast with all the image-centered analysis that surrounds and precedes him, Hillier, continuing the line of thought of the British Museum Catalogue, clarifies at last the literary nature of surimono. This is a passage worth quoting at length:

¹⁷⁵ Hockley (2003), 15-16

¹⁷⁶ (1960), 105, 106

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 107

Although the pictorial design of a surimono assumed rather more importance than the drawing in a *haiga*, it was still intended as an enhancement of the poetry, or a reinforcement of the inscription, and it is one of the surimono master's gifts—one often lost on us for lack of deep enough knowledge of the language and literature of Japan—to give over-tones to the verse rather than merely to illustrate it, to set up vibrations in the mind of the recipient, attuned to them. Among the men and women in Shunman's circle, or of his cultural level, a wealth of literature, legend, custom and lore was part of their consciousness and the slightest symbol, the faintest associative reference brought numerous ideas immediately to the surface, like lurking fish to a dropped crumb. In the haiku and *kyōka*, the writers often combined a concreteness of image with the vagueness of allusion, creating a field of suggestiveness in which the mind of the reader could roam at will. The designer of surimono achieved something of the same sort. Part of the pleasure to the recipient of a surimono would reside in appreciating the subtlety of the allusions, and it was a compliment to his intelligence if they were of the most recondite kind.¹⁷⁸

With this passage, Hillier does away with analysis of surimono as art prints to put his finger on the living heart of what these prints actually were in their own day, for the first time in any modern writing on the subject. He is drawing near to conclusions that will redefine surimono for art history, and open the field for a new kind of exploration. But abruptly, as though frightened by the precipitous conclusions towards which he is heading, he changes course. "From all of this," he writes:

it might be assumed that the art of surimono was nearer literature and calligraphy than to drawing and design, but that would be to misjudge it entirely. Its literary associations are part of its *raison d'être* but we can, fortunately, enjoy the prints as works of graphic art.¹⁷⁹

Hillier never clarifies, however, exactly how the treatment of surimono as a literary form would preclude its enjoyment as art—particularly in light of a plethora of familiar Japanese examples, such as picture scrolls, which are simultaneously monuments in literature and art history. His sloppy retreat is even more poorly

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. It is interesting to note how closely Hillier follows the previously quoted 1925 essay of Frederick Gookin in this passage, both in structure and idea.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 108

covered by his next statement, that it was necessary to introduce their literary function in order to justify the aesthetic deficiencies of surimono:

Some notion of their purport has to be known to explain the slightness, often, of the design, the enigmatic (to us) subject matter. The brevity of the drawing, akin to *vignetting*, is often suggestive like the pregnant dots ... of the writer.¹⁸⁰

Beneath this statement is the old belief that if surimono is a hybrid form, as Hillier can now hardly avoid acknowledging, then its constituent parts must somehow be incomplete. The space or concentration that would be taken by art alone has been encroached upon by the literary, and visual art itself has taken a literary function. Hillier cannot sustain this analysis any further; in the next paragraph, he falls back on his netsuke analogy of “surimono as miniature” and his agonizing about-face is complete.

How are we to understand Hillier’s stunning failure to follow his propositions through to their necessary conclusions? Was his “either/or” of art and literature simply a way of escaping certain conclusions that would have been detrimental to him personally, or part of a general refusal in the West to allow text and image to stand together equally, despite Hillier’s initial movement in this direction? Perhaps we should historicize Hillier’s failure in the context of art historical writings of his time, latter day reworkings of the division of the verbal and visual such as this pronouncement in Suzanne Langer’s influential 1957 Problems of Art:

Each of the great orders of art [poetry, painting, music etc.] has its own primary apparition which is the essential feature of all its works. This thesis...means that there can be no hybrid works, belonging as much to one art as to another.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Ibid

¹⁸¹ (New York, Scribners, 1957), 81-82

Hillier's acknowledgment of surimono as a hybrid is remarkable, but he displays clear discomfort at leaving the form categorically undefined, between the borders of art and poetry. Moreover, as a hybrid, surimono for Hillier cannot be a completely realized form, but is necessarily some sort of incomplete half-breed, without the fully formed features of either category. We are reminded again of Mitchell's historical analysis of the development of a requirement for stark divisions of painting and poetry as representative of racial fears in the time of emerging nations. Image—emblematic of the primitive and illiterate—must be kept at bay from the marks of civilization, writing.

In a more limited analysis, following his premises to their natural outcome would also have been detrimental to Hillier's own position in the world of Japanese art history, as he certainly realized. To explain this, we must first complete his task, and supply the conclusions he refused. First, surimono are a literary, as well as artistic practice, a group project that defies the typical focus on artist as sole determiner and maker, which was in fact the very basis of Hillier's New Approach. To accept that poets had a leading role in the creation of surimono would thus for him be to contradict the very artist-centered structure of the book he was writing. Second, because surimono are literary as well as artistic, the poetry on them deserves as much concentration as the imagery, and in fact, the imagery can only be properly understood in relation to the poems. But for Hillier, to say as much would effectively be to write himself out of a job, at least in regard to surimono. Because text and image are inseparable in the signifiatory functioning of surimono, interrelating to create levels of meaning beyond either individual input, the formal analysis of images as the sole producers of meaning would be rendered essentially useless. Lacking the skills to read the texts, Hillier would have to give up his place as interpreter of these works, and at least partly relinquish the study of surimono from the exclusive domain of art

history to literary studies. In order to interpret surimono, one would have to enter that complex realm of literary and historical detail that Hillier despaired of ever knowing, essentially initiating oneself as a member of the literary clubs, a lifelong and persona-altering task, doomed to incompleteness. This kind of detail work was not Hillier's forte, and he left it to Japanese critics and a few Western scholars to supply. Thus, to make central the need for this kind of scholarship would necessarily undermine his very place in the field. Hillier, I will show, ultimately became acutely cognizant of this fact, perhaps even made aware of it through his surimono misadventure.

But there is a yet more fundamental reason why the discussion of poetry in surimono has been found dangerous to writers seeking to describe and define them within something called *ukiyo-e*. For if the literary qualities and nature of surimono were brought to the fore, it would no longer be possible to discuss them simply within the bounds of *ukiyo-e* art. Once the connection of surimono with poetry and poetry clubs is established, then it becomes necessary to examine not only the practices of *ukiyo-e* artists, but of Tokugawa period poets and poetic practices. And when this is done (the project of this dissertation), surimono are linked to traditions other than art, and even within art, other than *ukiyo-e*. Such a shift in vision reveals that the *ukiyo-e* illustrated surimono is but a short-lived, regional practice within surimono's larger history. Not only are there surimono in other styles, and by artists with no affiliation with commercial *ukiyo-e* designers, but there are also a plethora of surimono, especially early pieces and later Kamigata works, without any images at all. The former case suggests that the *ukiyo-e* style was but one of many which could be utilized in the creation of a surimono, and that therefore surimono as a genre partly overlaps with, but is by no means consumed by the field of *ukiyo-e*. The latter case tells us without question that surimono is not primarily an artistic genre at all, but was born from, and sustained by, the poetry it presents. These facts were not available to

earlier writers on surimono due to the manner in which their vision was self-circumscribed: works without images, or those with images in a form less immediately recognizable than *ukiyo-e* (such as Shijō expressive stylization) were largely rejected from consideration, leaving *ukiyo-e*-illustrated, nineteenth century Edo surimono as the sole objects by which the form could be defined. But the time has come to plunge over the precipice Hillier skirted: surimono are not *ukiyo-e*, and can in no way be equated as a form with *ukiyo-e*, but arise from an altogether different motivation, and only become aligned with the *ukiyo-e* style late, and briefly, in their long history.

Hillier's 'dangerous' exploration and retreat reveal a great deal about Japanese print scholarship in his day, which is precisely the subject taken up in his 1962 article "*Ukiyo-e* in the West Today," the continuation of his about-face. While acknowledging the contributions in Tokugawa literature of Richard Lane (1926-2004) and Howard Hibbett, Hillier critiques the former's assessment of the need for literary studies in order to understand *ukiyo-e* art. In a review of Michener's popular but seriously flawed Floating World, Lane had written:

The key to this fascinating world is obviously its literature, both creative and historical. So long as the literature, history, customs and psychology of the Japanese in the Tokugawa Period remain a closed book to the *ukiyo-e* investigator, his studies can hardly progress beyond a reworking of the surmises of earlier writers, together with rarified discussions of style and necessarily limited comparisons with Western techniques. He remains forever an outsider: he cannot really enter the floating world.¹⁸²

Hillier, who must have felt included with Michener in Lane's criticism, was stung by this last remark, and felt the need to defend his techniques of formal and comparative analysis. If Lane is a "historian," then Hillier stakes his territory as an "art historian," for whom discussions of style "are, after all, the proper province."¹⁸³ In order to free

¹⁸² *Ukiyo-e Geijutsu*, Vol. 1 No. 1 (Japan Ukiyo-e Association, 1962), 10

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, 11

himself from Lane's criticism, Hillier sought to distinguish between the "internals" of style (the motivations and cultural field of the artists) and the "externals" (the formal qualities of artistic expression that developed sequentially, based on previous works), and to paint Lane as an "exclusionist," wanting to keep Japanese art entirely in its native context, and reject cross-cultural stylistic comparisons that would open it to a dialogue with world art.¹⁸⁴ Lane, then serving as editor of the journal, penned a biting sarcastic response, which he placed immediately after Hillier's article, suggesting that the success of Hillier's books was due to "a considerable audience that prefers its *ukiyo-e* a shade removed from reality, recast in the more familiar—if somewhat condescending?—mold of Western art and art criticism."¹⁸⁵ The lines were thus drawn, and Hillier, despite the early use of historical and literary materials that makes his analysis of surimono in A New Approach so interesting, was ultimately forced into the untenable position of asserting that Japanese art could be studied objectively, entirely devoid of its immediate context.

Hillier's withdrawal from engagement with the literary aspects of surimono is finalized in his 1979 article "Still-Life in Surimono." Here, rather than discussing the context or content (other than artistic) of the pieces, he focuses on the development of the still life genre in a pan-Asian setting, discussing Chinese prints and letter paper, and makes a formal, comparative analysis of surimono imagery with them, as well as with modern still life artists. The true reason for Hillier's choice to deal with still life

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, .9,11

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 12. Nor did their repartee end there. In a 1964 edition of *Ukiyo-e Geijitsu* (No.5), Hillier again takes a swipe at Lane, this time through a review of Shibui Kiyoshi's Utamaro. Defining Japanese scholarship as "insular" and more concerned with detail than with larger issues, Hillier argues "it is a curious thing that many in the west who profess to have a true appreciation of Impressionist painting and yet would confess unblushingly to a complete ignorance of the Prussian occupation of 1870 or of the laws governing hygiene in the Parisian brothels, feel it necessary to secure a pass into the 'floating world' before they can enjoy Utamaro's great composition, Eishi's superb line or Sharaku's intense portraiture." Hillier then paints Lane as "high-priest of the [ukiyo] cult," "fatalistically pronouncing excommunication" on foreign writers, like himself, 'who can never really enter the floating world.' Hillier, significantly, internalizes this judgment, stating "I prefer to remain impenitently an outsider so long as I can enjoy—as I think I do—the *art* of ukiyo-e." (13)

in surimono becomes apparent in the following passage, which is highly ironic in light of the actual semantic and ritual weight surimono objects carry, a point that would have been made apparent by a study of context:

Usually they [still lifes] convey no story, no anecdote, no message: they are already part way on the road to abstract art, because the objects have been selected—whatever the ostensible or feigned purpose—simply for what they offer as shapes, silhouettes, arabesques, colour, the contrast of textures, the most extreme in this sense amounting to a species of collage, where the artist integrates objects that have no relationship outside of the picture....¹⁸⁶

One senses in Hillier's run-on sentences a kind of desperation, a frantic attempt to cover with rhetoric a basic fact of which he is all-too aware. Perhaps worried that the reader too is aware of what he is avoiding, Hillier finally confronts it, stating "but it will be argued that this is to appreciate surimono at their pictorial level only." His answer to this proposed objection is simply astounding:

It seems perfectly legitimate to do so, for to us the pictorial element is the dominant feature....it will be objected that if we do not interpret the subjects and take into account the nuances and changed lights cast by the verses, we rob ourselves of the full flavour and significance of the prints.... But with so many still-life surimono, interpretation of any kind is superfluous.¹⁸⁷

This stunning refusal of meaning in surimono beyond the artistic level is backed up by an equally shocking division of surimono into "two classes," prints that were intended to call up a sequence of associations and allusions, and those that, "certainly to our superficial view, are purely pictorial, with objects chosen for their own intrinsic appeal of line, form, texture or colour."¹⁸⁸ Hillier does at least admit that his division is based on superficiality—based, in fact, on those surimono which had been explicated, and

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 78

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 78-79

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 79

those which had not—and his argument that artists chose materials for the sheer pleasures of their materiality is not wrong, but only part of the picture. Yet when Hillier attempts to prove his thesis by reducing the title and subjects of a Shinsai surimono under consideration to just meaningless bits of circumstantial support for the artist's expressive desires, he posits his own ignorance as evidence.¹⁸⁹

One might think, or at least hope, that the underlying motivation shaping, and limiting, Hillier's mode of scholarship—by which I mean his feud over method with Richard Lane—would be immediately apparent to scholars, and the flaws of Hillier's approach revealed. But far from calling Hillier to task for his failures of logic and internal contradictions, other scholars were actually eager to follow him in downplaying the importance of texts on surimono. Charlotte van Rappard-Boon and Matthi Forrer in their 1982 Rijksmuseum catalogue make exactly the same sort of dishonest assessment as Hillier's:

Though we know that there are people who think *kyōka* poetry embodies the ultimate in wit of the Edo culture, we feel that most of the poems on surimono do not contribute to the appreciation of their artistic value. Obscure allusions, which would require pages of explanation, alternate with an endless repetition of trite imagery.... We are well aware of the fact that only a small percentage of the iconographical subtleties have thus been brought to light.¹⁹⁰

The one advance in this evaluation over Hillier is that the texts have purportedly been read—at least for content, though the allusions are still found to be “obscure”—but are subsequently dismissed as not worthy of explanation. This argument brings up an important point: although surimono imagery in the nineteenth century was largely

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 80

¹⁹⁰ Catalogue of the Collection of Japanese Prints, Part III: Hokusai and His School: Japanese Prints c.1800-1840 (Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, 1982). It bears note that the “pages of explication required” argument, which Hillier also employs, has some relation to what I have discussed as Goncourt's ‘nodal point of otherness’ in surimono. In this orientalist gesture, surimono are simultaneously distanced as incomprehensibly ‘other’ and exalted as mysteriously complex and enticing for that very same impenetrability.

produced by professionals, the poetry was almost all by a far-flung group of amateurs, censored only in its selection process at *uta-awase*, and edited by the poetry group leaders. This circumstance did mean that surimono texts could be repetitious—so much so that sometimes one wishes to strangle the *uguisu* singing on the plum branch—but the real issue here is that the poetry on nineteenth century Edo surimono was no more meant to be viewed in isolation than the imagery. Only in combination do these forms make complete sense, and come to comprise a unity completely different in nature than its parts. After all, oxygen alone is airy and vapid, but combined with two parts of hydrogen, it becomes the substance of life. A compound simply cannot be understood through isolated analysis of its constituent elements.

Now, in light of the Lane-Hillier divide, which pigeonholed Hillier as a formalist and turned him away from the literary approach to surimono, the hope for recovering surimono texts and realizing the literary nature of these pieces might seem to reside with Lane, who had the knowledge and ability to deal with them. Unfortunately, this was not the case. For Lane approached *ukiyo-e* as a *shunga* (erotic print) enthusiast, ever-willing to challenge the absurdities of Western (and modern Japanese) moral standards, but in fact lacking Hillier's ability to see the larger themes and question the grand paradigms of *ukiyo-e* scholarship. Lane, who after taking his doctorate in Japanese literature at Columbia, moved to Japan and stayed there for the remainder of his life, prided himself on doing the kind of fine, detailed work that Japanese scholars excelled in and of which Hillier was so critical. In fact, most of Lane's studies of erotica from his final years were written directly in Japanese, and he developed a reputation as something of a cantankerous hermit, who had willfully withdrawn from the international scene.¹⁹¹ Moreover, though Lane did take on

¹⁹¹ Eric van den Ing, "On the Death of Dr. Richard Lane," *Andon: Shedding Light on Japanese Art* 76 (Leiden: Society for the Japanese Arts, 2004), 38

broader themes and definitions in his English language writings, he revealed himself to be disappointingly traditional in his approaches to *ukiyo-e*, completely bound in the paradigms of the connoisseur-type scholarship established in nineteenth century Europe.¹⁹² His “masters” (the title of his first book) did not differ greatly from the ones of old, and though he fought to have paintings, pre-Moronobu primitives and erotic works included as central in the *ukiyo-e* canon, he otherwise did not greatly disturb this canon, or question its purpose of being. To this extent, he was in fact far more conservative than Hillier.

Lane’s entrapment in the old paradigms of *ukiyo-e* scholarship are quite apparent in his approaches to surimono, which, following the pronouncements of Ficke’s connoisseurship and the trends of Japanese scholarship, played very little part in his early works. In his 1962 Masters of the Color Print, they merit two brief mentions, as “rare gift prints,” “directed towards a highly discerning audience.”¹⁹³ Lane’s acknowledged masterpiece, his 1978 Images from the Floating World, does little better, giving the traditional definition of surimono by function (as social card) and deluxe nature, with none of Hillier’s thoughtful reaching and struggle.¹⁹⁴ In fact, his celebrated “Illustrated Dictionary of *Ukiyo-e*” that fills the latter half of Images gives what must be counted as the worst definition of surimono in print, as well as the briefest: “privately commissioned prints, often elaborately printed.”¹⁹⁵ Once again, there is absolutely no distinction made here between surimono and commercial prints;

¹⁹² As C.H. Mitchell comments in his review of Lane’s Masters of the Japanese Print, “those who expected a revolutionary rewriting and reappraisal of *ukiyo-e* in Dr. Lane’s first full length book on the subject will be disappointed. To us, it is not a work of great original scholarship; in fact, surprisingly few new facts are offered....the book is...a general treatise on *ukiyo-e*, recapitulating the history along the general lines of earlier scholarship...” (*Ukiyo-e Geijitsu*, No. 2 (Nihon Ukiyoe kyōkai, 1963), 7

¹⁹³ (New York: Doubleday, 1962), 213, 310

¹⁹⁴ (New York: Konecky & Konecky, 1978), 159: “Surimono were prints privately issued for special occasions: New Year’s and other greetings, musical programs and announcements, private verse selections. They were issued in limited editions and featured immaculate printing of the highest quality.”

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 333.

surimono are simply *ukiyo-e* prints that are specially ordered by individuals and deluxe. How are we to understand that Lane, who had the ability to do so much more with them, turned a blind eye to surimono?

Lane himself suggests the reasons for his lack of interest in the final pages of Images, when, in speaking of Ōsaka prints, he states: “what these prints lack is the special élan and flavor of Edo *ukiyo-e*, a characteristic that removes them (together with Nara-e, Ōtsu-e, Nagasaki-e, Yokohama-e and most surimono) from the mainstream of the *ukiyo-e* tradition.”¹⁹⁶ The separation of surimono from *ukiyo-e*, a movement central to my thesis here, is in Lane’s pronouncement stated explicitly for the first time—but as a pejorative, dismissing surimono as secondary and unimportant. Lane explicates his feelings towards surimono in his Hokusai: Life and Work, of 1989, which benefited greatly from the new wave of surimono scholarship that had risen in the preceding decade. Here, Lane remarks that surimono are “the least understood of all varieties of *ukiyo-e* prints”—though not admitting his place in the perpetuation of that ignorance.¹⁹⁷ But he at long last summons his famous knowledge of Tokugawa Era literary practices to deal with *kyōka* and its publications, starting with an identification of “poetasters and verse-masters” as the commissioners of surimono,¹⁹⁸ and moving to a discussion of poetry-inspired surimono competitions as one reason for the no-expense-spared use of deluxe printing.¹⁹⁹ Lane also revises his view here that surimono were mainly social cards, describing them rather as “‘first editions’ for the leading poets of the time.”²⁰⁰ He therefore even goes so far as to admit that: “their literary and artistic importance should...not be undervalued.”²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶ 193

¹⁹⁷ (New York: Dutton, 1989), 27

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 13

¹⁹⁹ 25

²⁰⁰ 26

²⁰¹ Ibid

Overall, however, as the double negative in that judgment implies, Lane is hesitant, following the conventional standards of evaluating Japanese prints as fine art, to credit surimono with much importance. Over and again, he describes the “ephemeral” nature of surimono: “as casual prints, designed by major artists, but circulated to only a limited circle of aficionados, many of them were lost or destroyed within a month.”²⁰² Most extant surimono, Lane states, “survived quite by accident.”²⁰³ Although Lane does not explicitly say so, there is implicit in his account a judgment that surimono were merely ‘throw-away’ designs by the major artists, who saved their more important ‘artistic’ work for commercial prints.²⁰⁴ Speaking of reaction to them in Japan, he writes: “surimono were quite forgotten in the decades following their production. Even today in Japan they are valued mainly by scholars for their verses by noted poets, and for their signed and dated, though casual, pieces by famous *ukiyo-e* artists.”²⁰⁵

But the true reason for Lane’s own dismissal of surimono is that they do not fit his image of the “floating world.” In contrast to his emphasis on surimono as ephemeral artwork, he asserts the *very opposite* when he speaks of their content:

Surimono lie a trifle off the mainstream of *ukiyo-e*: their subjects—in harmony with their refined patrons—tend to revert to classical themes and still-life, rather than showing actual scenes of the vibrantly fleeting, floating world.²⁰⁶

One might ask of Lane how the *shunga* he favored—or any *ukiyo-e* for that matter—were less materially ephemeral than surimono, or represented any more the “actual scenes” of life, for both presented a tantalizing fantasy realm of desire fulfillment, in

²⁰² Ibid

²⁰³ Ibid

²⁰⁴ “The miniature *egoyomi*, by their nature, are hardly likely to harbor major works. Indeed, such smaller surimono are often of interest in tracing an artist’s early development.” (27)

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 26

²⁰⁶ Ibid

the case of Edo surimono for richness and aristocratic splendor, in *shunga*, carnal desire. Rather, I would argue, it is class implications and ethos that lie behind Lane's judgment, for surimono were inimitably bourgeois, upwardly motivated and brightly optimistic (the very qualities of American life Lane despised), *shunga* earthy and of the body, with the universality of lust explicitly denying class distinctions and the hierarchical structure of "civilization." In fact, Lane himself implies as much when he discredits surimono by adding "their audience, too, was hardly a proletarian one, consisting of the cultured classes who could afford such elegant playthings."²⁰⁷ Nonetheless, Lane manages to find a surimono to delight in, an image of a shy court lady who has just received a "silent companion" (a dildo) in a wooden box.²⁰⁸ "My personal taste in this medium," he states, "is for *ukiyo-e* subjects, not still-lives or classical themes."²⁰⁹

But what was "the floating world of Dr. Lane"?—to quote the title of an embittered response David Waterhouse wrote to Lane's review of his book, an article itself significantly titled "Floating World Morals vs. *Ukiyo-e* Scholarship."²¹⁰ This question is not simply an aside, but an attempt to get at the question of why Lane's dismissal of surimono from the center of *ukiyo-e* studies was cast as a pejorative judgment, rather than a statement, for example, of surimono's uniqueness as an independent signifying system, combining the literary and artistic realms. For although Lane is wholly correct in seeing surimono as a practice that does not fit in with commercial *ukiyo-e* in ethos, this is by no means grounds for rejecting its importance. Quite the opposite, analyzing surimono as a distinct entity leads to a new

²⁰⁷ Ibid

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 30

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 27. As an image of a court lady, this print could hardly be called an "*ukiyo-e* subject," yet Lane's designation of it as such reveals the centrality for him of explicit sexuality in the definition of *ukiyo-e*.

²¹⁰ See *Ukiyo-e Geijutsu* Nos. 12 and 13 (1966). In Waterhouse's stiffness in regard to Tokugawa Era morality, Lane found his perfect target, and Waterhouse quickly replaced Hillier as adversarial target.

understanding of the form and its significance as a unique discursive practice in early modern Japan. But Lane's critique of the moral hesitations and hang-ups of writers concerning Tokugawa sexual practices in his reviews is emblematic of the importance to him of the "floating world," as a means of critiquing the post-Victorian morality from which he had sought escape by leaving the USA.²¹¹ For this reason too, *shunga* constituted his prime area of interest, for their free and casual depiction of all manner of sex acts. The Edo "floating world," in other words, was for Lane symbolic as a site of resistance to officially imposed morality, both of its day, and by extension, ours, and this is what attracted him to the study of Saikaku and *ukiyo-zōshi*, as well as early, 'primitive' ukiyo-e. Surimono, by contrast, appeared staid, having none of *shunga*'s earthy vivaciousness.

But from this perspective, historically speaking, there are in fact no reasonable grounds for denying *kyōka* surimono a place in "floating world" culture. For is not the very "ephemeral" nature of surimono that Lane emphasized evidence that this practice was part of the spendthrift, hedonistic, "live-for-today" ethos by which the floating world has been characterized? Moreover, if the gilt lining of an externally plain merchant kimono can be discussed as resistance to the moral order imposed by the shogunate, then why not the privately printed and circulated gilt surimono? Certainly it can be, but Lane was not interested in promulgated thrift, for this was anything but a concern of his own time. His focus was on the bodily resistance of the common people against the tyranny of the established standards of 'civilization,' and surimono failed miserably in this regard, in raising what might be called the 'classical,' the

²¹¹ Unfortunately, modern Japan was not much better to him, as the police invaded his office and made off with his notes, photos and articles for his *shunga*-oriented magazine *Kikan Ukiyo-e* [English title: *Ukiyo-e: A Journal of Floating World Art*], publication of which was suspended for some time thereafter. Lane railed against the absurdities of the censorship system in modern Japan when the magazine went back in print. His pioneering efforts had some effect, however, as seen in the loosening of restrictions on the reproduction of *shunga* (without silver clouds or black boxes over the genitalia) in the 1990s.

ordered and highly refined past, as an ideal. It failed by emphasizing stillness and tranquility, timelessness and elegance—the control of the body—over the “vibrancy,” freedom and unattached movement of the floating world. In terms of more recent pop culture, Lane’s reaction might be compared to the disgust of rock-n-roll purists for the so-called ‘classical rock’ movement of the 1970s. For Lane similarly viewed surimono as a retreat from a popular, bodily-oriented revolution against the artificial standards of civilization, to their banal and pompous importation. In surimono, as Lane saw them, *ukiyo-e* was trying to be something it was not, to project respectability, class, and refinement. It was a shift from a movement of revolutionary resistance to conservative quietude. But it was only so in the context that was important to Lane, and in fact, as I will argue, constituted resistance of a different sort.

In discussing post-war scholarship on *ukiyo-e* and surimono, I have concentrated on the cases of Jack Hillier and Richard Lane as the most important, and emblematic, voices of this generation. Both were acknowledged as leading figures in the world of *ukiyo-e* studies, and their contrasting methods and treatments of surimono reveal not only two poles of scholarship, but also how deeply scholarship on *ukiyo-e* and surimono at this time was embedded in the old paradigms of critical approaches. Though each writer stretched the bounds of these paradigms, distinguishing surimono from *ukiyo-e* in new ways, focusing on the text-image complex and poetry rather than simply image, both ultimately failed to break out of traditional approaches and look at the field anew. However, their writings, particularly the early advances of Hillier in his New Approach, did prepare the way for a fresh generation of scholars to look closely at surimono again, to stress their literary aspects and to explore more deeply the history of this form. I would like now to look at this “new wave” of scholarship that rose from the late 1970s and continues to this day.

The Second Wave of Surimono Appreciation: The Surimono Scholars

To this point, all of the writers I have discussed were primarily focused on the genre of *ukiyo-e*, and approached surimono only secondarily, as a sub-category or type within that field. In this section, I will look at the authors of studies that focused on surimono exclusively. For the first time, I will have an opportunity here to mention Japanese scholarship, which until this point has been, as previously quoted statements by Lane and Mirviss described, remarkably uninterested in the field of surimono. As many of the scholars in this section, particularly Kira Sueo, Matthi Forrer, Roger Keyes, and John Carpenter, are authors of important works that comprise the main sources I rely on and argue with throughout the remainder of this dissertation, I will introduce their work here in outline only, reserving the details of their analysis for those places in the dissertation where they are applicable. Moreover, it will be impossible, given the number of lengthy, recent publications on surimono, to summarize them all in full; rather, after introducing a 1970 work to show the state of scholarship at that time, I will discuss the “new wave” of scholarship comparatively, in relation to the main themes of surimono definition I have introduced thus far, namely poetry, text-image relations, the identification of surimono with *ukiyo-e*, and the attempt to outline a history of the form.

The first full-length book devoted exclusively to surimono was Kurt Meissner’s Japanese Woodblock Prints in Miniature: The Genre of Surimono. As can be seen immediately from the title, Meissner’s 1970 work, based on his own collection, is primarily a composite of previously presented ideas and modes of definition, aimed largely at the collector. He has no doubt that surimono are a species of *ukiyo-e*, for example, though he does include them in a most idiosyncratic manner, along with commercial prints and erotic images as one of “three groups” in “the family of *ukiyo-e*.” The genre of surimono is, he states, “the beautiful and very

elegant little sister” of these bolder, older and, most oddly, “masculine” forms.²¹²

Without closely demonstrating the connection between the two—as no writer to the time had—Meissner posits the 1765 *egoyomi* as the forerunners of surimono, which leads him to a discussion of the “art clubs” which created these works and surimono. Here, Meissner’s discussion shows that he has benefited from the discussion of Hillier on the poetic nature of surimono, but he also defuses trouble early by emphasizing the images on them “as the product of a fine collaboration between professional artists and talented lay customers.”²¹³ Interestingly, he also describes Ōsaka surimono he has seen, and the difference between these and Edo surimono:

The surimono printed in Osaka were huge in size as the number of club members who immortalized themselves with their poems was also very high. On the surimono of Edo, for example, two or occasionally four poems never disturbed the beautiful impression the pictures made. Fifty or more poems...take up the surimono of Osaka so that the picture is limited in size and thus of secondary importance.²¹⁴

Though this passage is factually inaccurate (there were also smaller Ōsaka surimono, and some with only a few poets, while early Edo surimono could have dozens of poets as well) it is an important mention of different ‘schools’ of surimono making, and also stresses the primary importance of poetry on some works. Meissner, moreover, asserts that in Edo surimono too, “the poems were [originally] just as important as the picture,” though as “the men who wrote the lines were not actually poets [sic],” they are “only of secondary importance to the foreign collector today.”²¹⁵ The section of

²¹² *Japanese Woodblock Prints in Miniature: The Genre of Surimono* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles Tuttle Company, 1970), 14. This division seems based more on moral than rational criteria, as erotic prints were certainly commercial, available on the open market in the same manner as the kabuki and courtesan prints Meissner terms “commercial.” Surimono comprises the “little sister” apparently because of its small format and qualities of restraint, lacking the boldness of commercial prints in color, size and subject.

²¹³ 23. Hillier’s *New Approach* is the only book in Meissner’s bibliography that contains this information.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid

translation he devotes to sample poems, full of gross errors and without any explanation, is unlikely to disabuse anyone of this notion.

Though Meissner's study was flawed, it was also a pioneering work that presented 33 surimono in full color plates, far more than had appeared in any book to that time, thus creating broader public awareness and paving the way for other publications. The 1970s also saw a boom of interest in Japanese prints as several of the great old French collections came up for sale, most notably those of Vever—which contained many surimono—auctioned in four parts in 1974, and of La Veel—also rich in surimono—sold in 1979. Meanwhile, surimono studies began to benefit from expanding Japanese literature programs at universities, which produced more people capable of taking up the challenge of their difficult texts, and brought a new group of scholars to this field. The meeting of popular and scholarly interests was achieved by the creation of the International Surimono Society in 1977, a short-lived venture led by the collector Sidney Ward, but that nonetheless produced three journals and one conference publication with valuable papers in this field. The symposium of the society, held in Tokyo in 1977, is notable for the fact that only two Japanese scholars, Suzuki Jūzō and Matsudaira Susumu, chose to join, suggesting that most of the momentum in surimono studies was building from outside Japan. Suzuki's presentation in particular, which astutely traced the literary allusions of a set of prints through analysis of their text-image relationships, was the first close reading of surimono of this kind, and must have inspired the scholars in attendance with the possibilities for surimono interpretation. This interest came to a head at the very close of 1970s, with the rapid publication of a number of books on surimono, including Kondō Eiko's Les Objets Tranquilles: Natures Mortes Japonaises 18-19 siècles, Matthi Forrer's Egoyomi and Surimono: Their History and Development, Theodore Bowie's The Art of Surimono, and Edythe Polster and Alfred Marks' massive

Surimono: Prints by Elbow, as well as some important articles by Roger Keyes and the full “Proceedings of the International Surimono Society” with seven papers, all published within the space of two years (1979-1980). This spurt of activity has been followed by more sporadic, but also more accomplished studies: Keyes’ two masterful museum catalogues of the mid-1980s, important catalogues by his successor in poetry and image analysis, John Carpenter, in the 1990s and 2000s, and a breakthrough catalogue by Asano Shūgō for the Chiba exhibition of 1997, which finally connected a new stream of Japanese *haikai* surimono scholarship, led by Kira Sueo, to Western analyses of *kyōka* surimono.

Needless to say, it will be impossible to treat this sudden flood of texts in every detail, but I would like to call attention to the changes in approach and mode that mark transforming definitions of surimono in the more important of these works. Of primary significance is the new attention given to poetry, and to the *kyōka* movement as a whole. Much of the initial writing on *kyōka*, particularly Kondō’s account, follows closely the material presented in Donald Keene’s 1976 study of Tokugawa literature, World Within Walls,²¹⁶ but there is also an original, word-by-word explication of *kyōka*’s functioning in Alfred Marks’ preface, and both he and Kondō present translations (though not explanations) for surimono poetry sporadically in their books. Theodore Bowie’s catalogue, relying on a pair of graduate student translators, is superior still, giving parallel Japanese-English texts and listing the puns and allusions in the poetry, though at times rather vaguely, merely stating, but not explicating the nature of the reference. In this approach, which is perfected in Roger

²¹⁶ 512-532. But Keene’s account itself is based on Hamada Giichiro’s classic essay “Kyōka” in *Kōza Nihon Bungaku* (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1968) and his contribution (with Sugimoto Nagashige) to the *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei* volume *Senryū Kyōka Shū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970), so it is difficult to determine which was her source.

Keyes' 1984 and 1985 surimono books, the relations between texts and imagery at last regain their central place in the appreciation of surimono.

And it is precisely in *approach*, rather than in explicit statement, where authors reveal their actual understanding of surimono as a form. In Marks' book, despite his initial assertion that surimono are "an inextricable mixing of pictorial and literary art,"²¹⁷ texts and images are still entirely separate, still function as individual units, and so rarely rise above the decorative. The poetry is pretty and imagistic in Marks' translations, but without explication is all but meaningless fluff. Because of the near-impossibility of translating *kyōka* and capturing all of the puns and allusions, the translator is left to make choices about which level of meaning—literal or referential—on which to focus, and usually takes the former, eliminating the associative. This elimination only serves to reaffirm the old prejudices against *kyōka* as an amateurish, trite and trivial form, not worthy of translation. Therefore, to attempt to capture a *kyōka* poem in English or French without footnotes or explanation of cultural associations and wordplay does more injustice than service to the poetry. Moreover, in surimono, where the poem functions not only by itself but in reference to an explicit pictorial element, to fail in opening the allusions and puns to readers so that they can capture the connection with the image is to continue to believe that surimono texts and images function independently, that one is merely decoration for the other. In Bowie's work we glimpse for the first time, and in Keyes' see fully, the ramifications of the text-image complex in nineteenth century Edo surimono. Approach here speaks louder than mere statement of text-image unity.

In a similar vein, though these 'new wave' studies contribute much to the knowledge of poetry on surimono, both generally in characterizations of the *kyōka* movement and specifically in the particular pieces on which they focus, they remain

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trapped in the paradigm that surimono is primarily a form of visual art and part of *ukiyo-e*. This criticism, in fact, holds true for *all* works on *kyōka* surimono to the present, and is apparent again in textual approach. For all the talk of artistic and literary unity, surimono are inevitably presented by the names of their pictorial designers, or as ‘anonymous’ when a signature is absent, despite the fact that the poetry on surimono is *always* signed. In order to be consistent with the views of text-image unity they argue, scholars have an obligation to critique their assumptions about the placement of surimono in *ukiyo-e* and to examine their method of presentation, which implicitly situates the visual as primary and artists as surimono’s creators. Moreover, were they to utilize more variety in presentation, by chronology, poetry club affiliation, or theme (both poetic and pictorial) for example—though arrangement by artist would still have a place within such schemes—scholars would be able to bring to the fore largely overlooked aspects of surimono, such as the association of certain artists and calligraphic styles with certain clubs and poets, or the chronological development of specific tropes in poetry and image. That such approaches have not been actualized, together with some explicit statements on artists and images in the studies of the past quarter-century, reveal that surimono are still being viewed within the old paradigms of the late nineteenth century, as part of a pictorial art form known as *ukiyo-e*.²¹⁸

This paradigm is most explicitly formulated in Matthi Forrer’s 1979 Egoyomi and Surimono, which opens with this pronouncement:

Egoyomi and surimono are an essential element of *ukiyo-e* and should form an integral part of the general histories and not be treated separately.²¹⁹

²¹⁸ One exception to this rule, from a contemporary Japanese approach to surimono that pointedly avoids any identification with *ukiyo-e*, was the *Haikai ichimazuri* exhibit at the Kakimori Library in 1991. This exhibition and its accompanying catalogue ordered surimono according to the season for which they were made, and then by chronology, with fascinating results.

²¹⁹ (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1979), 1

As might be expected from this opening statement, the irony of which seems unintended, Forrer's separate study of surimono is of a different sort from the other three c.1979 books I have described. Although like the others, it mentions the importance of poetry in the development of surimono and describes the *kyōka* movement in brief, Forrer presents no translations at all, and does not greatly explicate the text-image relationship in surimono. Rather, his intentions are of a different order, to provide, for seemingly the first time, a formal definition of surimono and its related terms, and an analysis of the history and development of the genre. Specifically, he seeks to sort out the conflation of surimono with *egoyomi*, to establish both the differences and the relations between these forms.

Forrer's is truly the first attempt at a comprehensive genre definition of surimono, superceding the many casual descriptions that writers from the nineteenth century on had used to distinguish surimono from, while relating it simultaneously to, other types of *ukiyo-e*. After some preliminary discussion about the difficulty of producing an exact definition for surimono, Forrer unveils his:

Surimono (lit: printed thing) refers to prints that were privately produced and printed in limited editions, to be distributed among friends and not put on sale. They were mostly designed for special occasions and are characterized by an intimate relation between the poems, usually composed by the people who ordered them, and the pictures. They are usually expensively printed on the best quality *hōshogami* [announcement paper].²²⁰

Though Forrer's definition partakes of all the old standards, it is unique in emphasizing not only the *necessary* inclusion of poetry, but also of the "intimate" *relations* between it and imagery, as part of a genre distinction. This aspect then allows him to make a clean break between surimono and privately commissioned

²²⁰ 4

*egoyomi*²²¹—which otherwise share all of his definitional aspects of *surimono*—though he must therefore create a third, intermediate category, “*daishō surimono*,” which have the calendar markings in addition to the poetry-image relation. These prints, he writes, “fall into the category of *surimono*,” being “not primarily designed as calendar prints, but give the signs as incidental information.”²²²

Although Forrer is still operating completely within the field of *ukiyo-e*, defining nineteenth century Edo pieces as the entirety of the *surimono* genre, his strict definitions do serve to divide *surimono* and *egoyomi* as distinct forms. These had been frequently confused in previous studies²²³ (and in fact, still are in some contemporary works²²⁴), for it must be admitted that post-Meiwa era *egoyomi* and *ukiyo-e*-illustrated *surimono* share so much in common. Once his genre distinctions are neat, Forrer’s “history” is simultaneously accomplished: all he must do from this point is to clarify how the privately printed *egoyomi* developed into the poetic *surimono*. He does this with greater detail and examples than anyone before him, particularly in his account of post-Meiwa Period (particularly 1780s) *egoyomi*, a smaller format print that emphasized a clever, “puzzle” effect, which one can thus

²²¹ Defined as “any print that combines the numerals for long and/or short month of the year with a picture”

²²² Ibid

²²³ Suzuki Jūzō, for example, sees *egoyomi* (along with *hikifuda* and other forms) as one type of *surimono*, for he defines *surimono* as any privately made print with an image—see *Edo-gaku jiten*, 489. The definition of *surimono* that guides this study, by contrast, is built on a focus on *surimono*’s historical emergence, not such a retrospective, accumulative view.

²²⁴ For example, Mirviss (1995), 13. But the separation or inclusion of *egoyomi* from/in *surimono* is truly one of the ‘arbitraries’ of genre definition. *Egoyomi* absolutely deserve a place in the history of *surimono*, yet in my opinion, should absolutely be treated as a separate genre, a strand of printmaking practice that begins as a commercial enterprise, goes underground as a private production (influenced by Edoza *haikai* poetics and *haikai* *surimono*), then increasingly merges with the function of *surimono* through the addition of poetry, until the calendar function (but not format) drops away, giving birth to the so-called “miniature *surimono*.” The difference in viewpoint in defining the relation of *surimono* and *egoyomi* is thus one of chronology: retrospectively, seeing how *kyōka* *surimono* are imbued with so many of the traits of *egoyomi*, it is easy to see *egoyomi* as part of, if not the root of, the *surimono* genre, but moving sequentially through history, we see that *surimono* and *egoyomi* had very different forms and functions in the mid-1760s, which merged only gradually and partially in the decades of the 1780s, 90s and 1800s, until the *shikishi* *surimono* emerged as a final, compromise form in the 1810s.

easily envision beside the miniature surimono of this and the following decade. From there, the transition to the square surimono is known, and Forrer's "history and development," accomplished in a mere twenty pages, seems complete.

But there is a problem. Forrer is unable to account for the large format "*yoko-nagaban*" (横長判) or long, horizontal surimono, which he terms "the most radical development," for it has nothing whatsoever to do with miniature *egoyomi*. Forrer actually believes this format to be a development of the 1790s, and a result of poets commissioning images from professional artists: "a clear separation between the text and the design soon led to the use of larger paper formats."²²⁵ A few pages later, it is attributed to a different cause: "artists and poets found the sizes still in use in the early 1790s too small to suit their tastes and requirements."²²⁶ "Judging from dated examples and stylistic evidence," he adds, "they [*yoko-nagaban*] appear to have flourished from about 1797 to 1815." Then he discusses a reported 1785 sample, disputes its dating, and mentions in its place a certain 1794 example, but none earlier, before inexplicably (though correctly) concluding that, at any rate, "the format seems to have been used at an earlier date than 1785."²²⁷

Forrer's extreme confusion on the problem of what he calls the *yoko-nagaban*²²⁸, by which he refers to what was in fact the primary medium for surimono throughout the early eighteenth century—the earliest known example dated 1702—is emblematic of the problem of identifying surimono with *ukiyo-e* practices. Believing that surimono is a form of *ukiyo-e*, and perhaps even that representations of all of the

²²⁵ Ibid, 19

²²⁶ Ibid, 21

²²⁷ Ibid 21-22

²²⁸ Forrer's "*yoko nagaban*" is precisely half of the *ōboshō zenshiban* sheet, cut along the horizontal fold line. In some cases, this was an actual, original format of surimono, but in many, it is the result of the textual half of a surimono being later cut away. Forrer's emphasis on the *yoko nagaban*, rather than the *ōboshō zenshiban*, reveals his emphasis on imagery, taking into account only the illustrated panel and its dimensions, though he is clearly aware (and at times, without question speaking) of the folded *ōboshō zenshiban* when he refers to "*yoko nagaban*."

pictorial types of Japanese single sheet printing can be found in books on *ukiyo-e*, Forrer completely misses three-quarters of a century of surimono activity, with over one hundred extant examples. Nor is he alone in his confusion. Until Asano Shūgō's groundbreaking catalogue for the major 1997 Chiba Museum surimono exhibition, which relied heavily on the work of Kira Sueo for treating early, *haikai* examples, there was only limited awareness that the first surimono with poetry do not date to the mid-1780s, but rather to the very beginning of the eighteenth century, with still earlier roots.²²⁹ Though these pieces contain primarily *hokku*, not *kyōka* poetry, and are illustrated by artists not in the *ukiyo-e* style or lineage, they are nevertheless immediately recognizable as surimono, having an identical format and layout as Forrer's "*yoko-nagaban*," and being "privately produced and printed in limited editions, to be distributed among friends...[on] special occasions" etc. There are distinctions between these pieces and nineteenth century Edo *kyōka* surimono in approach and text-image relations, however, and thus Forrer's definition must be slightly altered to include them. Moreover, the existence of these pieces dwarfs Forrer's history and development to just a small section of the complete picture. Surimono, in fact, did not develop out of *egoyomi*, but rather privately made *egoyomi* out of *haikai* surimono, and only then, *kyōka* surimono out of the twin streams of *egoyomi* and *haikai* surimono. These are facts that still have not achieved full awareness in Western-language scholarship, and even the most recently produced books on surimono, clinging futilely to the *ukiyo-e* mode, seem willfully ignorant of them.

It is perhaps unfair to critique the finer *kyōka* surimono studies of recent decades for not being aware of material that was only at the time of their writing

²²⁹ A previous exhibition by the Kakimori library, titled "Haikai Ichimaizuri," had presented these works in 1991, but to a much more limited audience.

coming to light in Japan, but there has been an incredible lack of dialogue between Japanese and non-Japanese specialists in the area of surimono, which has left scholars working in completely different registers. The fact is that by the time Roger Keyes had published his great study of the Chester Beatty collection in 1985, in which he postulated loosely about the early origins of surimono, Kira Sueo's "Concerning *Saitanchō* and *Saitan* Surimono," which held precisely the answers and materials Keyes sought, was already two years old. Part of the problem has been terminology and disciplinary identification: scholars of *haikai* surimono have preferred to title their subject, and the books and exhibitions associated with them, with the more literary sounding "*haisho*" (俳書・"*haikai* publications") and "*haikai ichimaizuri*" (俳諧一枚刷・"single sheet prints with *haikai*"), discussing these works in relation to literature. In fact, many or even most of the objects they describe, as Kira and others admit within their studies, are surimono. But these are connected not to *ukiyo-e* artists and floating world ethics, but to the world of *haikai* poetry groups and their practices, primarily in the eighteenth century. Practitioners of *haikai* surimono include students of Bashō, major Tokugawa political figures including daimyō, and leading poets of the eighteenth century, such as Buson. For this reason, perhaps, Kira and his group have been reluctant to explicitly link their practices up with the plebian, commercially linked development of late eighteenth and nineteenth century *kyōka* surimono, leaving these two strands of scholarship largely unconnected. But the time is ripe to bind them, and to see the full diversity and growth of surimono practice, complete with all its roots and branches. This will be the challenge of the subsequent chapters.

The radically different placement and definition of surimono by those in Japan who approach this medium from the point of view of *haikai* poetry reveal quite clearly how contingent and arbitrary genre definitions can be, and how completely they circumscribe and define the object they create. For although Kira and his followers

are perfectly correct in emphasizing the importance of poetry in the genesis, development and practice of surimono, their studies are thoroughly limited by their definition of what they call “*haikai ichimaizuri*,” “single sheet prints with *haikai* poetry.”²³⁰ Making this their object of study, they exclude from view surimono without *haikai* (including *kyōka* and announcement surimono, as well as to some extent the *haikai*-influenced Meiwa *egoyomi*) while including in the genre other single sheet works with *haikai* poetry that did not strictly speaking function as surimono (such as *saitan mitsumono*, *haikai renga* recording sheets or commercial prints with *haikai*.) Although the connections drawn out through this mode of definition are fascinating, particularly in the broader field of *haisho*, which includes illustrated books with *haikai* and thus allows surimono to be seen within the larger field of *haikai* illustration, its limitations are paralyzing, particularly in historical terms of seeing the full growth and development of a distinct surimono genre. Kira, in fact, uses the word ‘surimono’ only in its broader context, as a printed (primarily privately printed) object, rather than in its limited sense of an occasional poetic presentation sheet, thereby maintaining a clear distinction between the *haikai ichimaizuri* poetic print and surimono as a wider field including advertisements, pilgrim’s labels and personal announcements.²³¹ Indeed, so particular is he about the definition of *haikai ichimaizuri* that he mentions his hesitations about the efficacy of calling an unusual *haikai* surimono diptych an *ichimaizuri*, for it is in two sheets.²³² The vagaries of genre definition are here at their most explicit, for there is absolutely no substantial distinction between this diptych and single sheet works of the *haikai* surimono genre. Nor, for that matter, should Meiwa *egoyomi* or *kyōka* surimono be stripped of their intimate connection to the *haikai* surimono genre, simply because they do not contain

²³⁰ *Haikai Ichimaizuri* (Itami: Kakimori Bunko, 1991), 68

²³¹ Private correspondence, 1/29/05.

²³² Ibid.

haikai poetry. Due to the limitations of genre definition and disciplinary identification,²³³ however, it took a museum director, Asano Shūgō, to make the first, general attempt at bridging the work of Kira with that of Western surimono specialists. Much work remains to be done in drawing the two points of view together, however.

Once the full range of surimono history is viewed, the works of the past two decades can only seem very short-sighted, trapped in the old paradigm that surimono are aligned mainly with the practice of *ukiyo-e*. Though this failing, particularly in recently published books, is not excusable, the merits of these writings in describing the nature—though *not* the historical background—of nineteenth century surimono cannot be underestimated. Keyes' 1984 study of the Spencer Museum collection, for example, presents fresh material on the types of surimono's symbolic language, calligraphy, and imagery, as well as of the evolution of style, albeit mostly within the *kyōka* version of the form. He also attempts to define surimono in an entirely new way, not merely by its physical features, functions or mode of creation, but according to its place as an implied philosophical statement within Tokugawa cultural life:

Surimono were an affirmation of the intimate, delicate bond between the changing human world and the stable, dependable world of nature, and of the continuity between past and present. They were...the flower of a conviction that the world and human-kind were not separate, and that personal contentment could be achieved in the midst of the commonplace objects and events of daily life. These truths were neither abstractly nor solemnly expounded; they were simply taken for granted and conveyed through image and verse with the easy playful freshness of a breeze on a spring day.²³⁴

²³³ That these are disciplinary, not linguistic or national divisions, can be seen in Japanese writings on *kyōka* surimono produced after Asano's catalogue (Kobashi Fumiko, Tanaka Tatsuya, Kubota Katsuhiro and even Asano himself), which fail to break out of the view that perceives the largely *ukiyo-e* illustrated *kyōka* surimono as a historically isolated art object, connected primarily to *ukiyo-e* and *kyōka* practices, but not meaningfully to anything before, especially *haikai*. I will analyze a recent essay by Kobayashi in this regard at the close of this section. The same failing, as I have mentioned, holds true for the *haikai* specialists in their isolated approach to *haikai ichimaizuri*. Remarkable as it is, it seems as though these specialists live on separate islands, or in parallel universes, completely unaware of each others' existence and uninterested in communicating.

²³⁴ (New York, San Francisco, Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1984), 11

Keyes' grand vision of surimono as a practice leads him also to a new definition of the form through its unique system of signification:

Surimono record a pursuit of truth quite different from our own: a pursuit of truth through the senses...which counts thought, feeling, memory and association together with sight, sound and touch.²³⁵

His work is thus unique among scholars in taking a macro as well as a micro approach, analyzing not only individual pieces, but the place of the form in ideology, semiotics and the field of 'culture.'²³⁶

Keyes' infectious idealism, of which this dissertation admits itself a happy victim, is built partly on the selective analysis of some of the most involved and complex examples of text-image relations in the collection, with sixty pieces presented in full size, color and description, and another 268 relegated to the catalogue in the back. Superb flights of imagination like Keyes' No.23, with an image of a microscope and butterfly to represent poems on the theme of Zhuang Zi—who after dreaming he was a butterfly questioned the nature of self, reality and being—represent the ultimate ideal of surimono in at least one sense, that very few works could actually live up to. Nevertheless, it is acceptable to discuss and define a form by its most profound and intricate works, though the suggestion that all examples are equally successful is misleading. In fairness to him, Keyes admits as much when he states that surimono were "occasionally trite,"²³⁷ though it is easy to lose sight of this fact in his glowing descriptions and edited selection. Not all surimono rise equally to the task of being a

²³⁵ Ibid, 21.

²³⁶ In fact, Keyes' musings on the larger importance of surimono in society and human thought have an earlier basis in the American Theosophist movement, which aimed at enhancing human life through aesthetics and comparative religion. One of the leaders in this movement, Manley P. Hall, wrote a series of articles on surimono in the 1960s and early 70s, published in the journal of the Theosophist Philosophical Research Society. Hall described the psychological benefits of meditating on the beauty of surimono, which allowed one to "relax and gain something of the feeling of *shibui*" and thus to escape our "stress-ridden culture." See Mirviss and Carpenter (2000), 28, and PRS Journal (1963) 80.

²³⁷ Keyes (1984), 11.

unique “pursuit of truth” or a “conviction” about the meaning of human life. This more prosaic assessment of text-image relations in Carpenter’s catalogue of the Wright Collection is far closer to the reality found in a broad sampling of the form:

An appreciation of poems on surimono can in some cases actually alter or deepen one’s perception of the artist’s design. Conversely, the reading of the poem is likely to be affected by the accompanying images. Sometimes, the artist adds a level of visual punning that gives an unexpected twist to the poem. Even when the verses are conventional New Year’s greetings or jocular word-puzzles with no direct relationship to the image, the process of reading inscriptions allows one to pause over a print, to hold it longer in the hand or in the eye.²³⁸

Nevertheless, Keyes’ approach in the Spencer Museum book is perfectly valid, if more aesthetic and connoisseurship-based than comprehensively historical in basis. No more than we would represent the *Kokinshū* by its mediocre or unoriginal poems should we insist that surimono be defined by its median average, which is without doubt somewhat below the audacious experimentation that Keyes posits as the nature of the genre.²³⁹

The subjectivity of Keyes’ essay and approach in the Spencer Museum catalogue is also balanced by his more objectively historical approach to the Chester Beatty collection, published in the following year. Here, Keyes presents the entire collection, translating and describing all of the Edo surimono—though Shijō surimono and poetry albums are reserved for separate sections and neither translated nor as closely described. Keyes’ introduction is also far more factual and textually oriented than his musings in the Spencer catalogue. He presents a summary of Tokugawa Period writings on surimono, and concludes from these that the form must have begun in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, far earlier than Forrer, for example, had posited. Unfortunately unaware of Kira’s scholarship, contemporary with his

²³⁸ 37

²³⁹ 11

own, Keyes' conclusions remain tentative, however, for he is unaware of extant examples to back up his claims of an earlier origin for surimono, while the errors he notes in some textual accounts make all of them suspect. Therefore, the origins of surimono are still clouded in vagueness in his history, though Japanese research had already begun to shed clear light on them a few years before. Perhaps due to his failing here, which would have rooted early surimono to poetic practices and dictated a more sequential approach to history and development, Keyes ultimately presents a traditional, ahistorical overview of the kinds and purposes of surimono, with different stages mixed together, risking the reduction of poetry in a list of secondary, offshoot and minor uses. Nevertheless, Keyes strives to retain the centrality of poetry, and returns to it in the final third of his essay, describing Edo practices in some detail. With the exception of structure, introducing surimono by the image-designing artists, his approach in the catalogue itself is thoroughly aligned with his ideas. As in the Spencer Museum book, he puts to shame the old disclaimer and mystification that to explain all of the puns and allusions in a surimono would take pages, dispatching a piece and its maze of associations in at most a paragraph or two, though leaving the reader to wander in wonder after, slowly savoring the twists and turns of the interplay between aspects of contemporary reality and what might be called "cultural memory."

Keyes' successor in his treatment of surimono texts and images is John Carpenter, whose translations have slightly more elegance, utilizing evocative line breaks, for example, in place of Keyes' prosaic, although in some respects more historically accurate, running approach.²⁴⁰ With Carpenter, trained in classical

²⁴⁰ Line breaks in inscribed Japanese poetry, as I will describe in the next chapter, do not necessarily follow the rhythmical breaks (5-7-5 / 7-7, for example). The conventional decision of translators to break lines according to rhythm is thus somewhat questionable. Modern Japanese texts and traditional anthologies, moreover, present poetry in single, unbroken lines, leading some to argue that line breaks are an artificial imposition. They do exist, however, in most forms of inscribed poetry, although differ here according to material format (*tanzaku*, *shikishi* or *kaishi*), rather than internal poetic structure.

Japanese poetry and calligraphy, surimono receive a primarily literary treatment for perhaps the first time, with more attention paid to the use of poetic tropes and allusive echoes (*honkadōri*). As the titles of the sections in his introduction to the Frank Lloyd Wright collection—“Poetical Devices of *Kyōka*,” “Poets and Poetry Circles,” “Formats of Texts,” “Still Life and Literati Tastes,” “Poems and Scenes Drawn from the Past,” and “Poems Attached to Beauty Prints”—suggest, Carpenter’s approach stresses literature, calligraphy and an analysis of surimono classicism, not ignoring images, but focusing in closely on the long-ignored literary aspects of the surimono genre. He is especially adept at culling out the hidden meanings in obscure texts, transforming otherwise dull poetry to pieces sparkling with wit. Like Keyes, he takes the reader carefully through the many layers, connections and twists in surimono, explicating the manner in which texts and images function together to produce meaning, a method aligned with his thesis statement that “surimono are the product of an imaginative and intellectual collaboration between an artist and one or more poets.”²⁴¹ Unfortunately, artists still receive “top billing” throughout his catalogues, though these have been, to date, collaborations with the art dealer Joan Mirviss.²⁴²

But valuable as his close readings and ideas are, Carpenter at times seems unable or unwilling to draw back and see the larger social and political ramifications of the practices he is describing. An example of this is his discussion of surimono classicism, particularly in his essay “Allusions to Courtly Culture in Surimono of the Bunka-Bunsei Era.”²⁴³ While he elaborates quite well the many ways that nineteenth century surimono “recall” (in fact create) an image of the ancient Japanese past, he

Personally, I find line breaks more evocative, and believe that the rhythmical and grammatical structure of Japanese verse naturally suggests them, as aural, rather than visual dividers.

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²⁴² Dealers, of course, have an innate interest in asserting the primacy of the artist, playing up the value of connoisseurship, and downplaying the non-artistic, commercial functions of *ukiyo-e* in general.

²⁴³ Mirviss and Carpenter (2000), 39-46.

sees this only as “the result of an intentional historicizing style, and a tendency of the period to look back to the past for artistic inspiration, cultural legitimacy and imaginative escape.”²⁴⁴ In fact, as I will argue later in this dissertation, Carpenter has merely stated the means as though they were the ends, for this summoning up of the aura of the classical has far deeper implications. Likewise, Carpenter’s concept of what constitutes “court culture” is uncritical, merely applying the modern “national literature” (*kokubungaku*) ideal of classical Japan, drained of China, without trying to elucidate what meanings the “courtly” might have had in the late Tokugawa Period. In other words, when Carpenter states, “the well educated poets who commissioned these prints were in a complex dialogue with *their own* past,”²⁴⁵ he is not at all critical of the possessive, and what content it might have had before the imposition of the national imaginary. For the very same reason, he makes excessive meaning of a series of the “Twenty-Four Paragons of Filial Piety” that replaced Chinese models with Japanese, tying this to “the cultural agenda of the National Learning movement.”²⁴⁶ In fact, however, the Japanese models for the 24 paragons had been made as early as the late seventeenth century, and Chinese historical and literary material forms part of a large, unsegregated pool of elements from which surimono designers freely drew. “China,” in other words, was an intrinsic and undifferentiated part of the “Japanese” classical realm that surimono commissioners were exploring, and the borders that Carpenter anachronistically assumes were not so clearly marked for them.

Carpenter’s 2004 essay on the links between national learning and the surimono movement, “Textures of Antiquarian Imagination: Kubo Shunman and the *Kokugaku* Movement,” goes much further, however, in meaningfully tracing the intimate connections between national learning scholars, *ukiyo-e* artists and *kyōka*

²⁴⁴ Ibid, 39

²⁴⁵ Ibid, 42

²⁴⁶ Ibid, 43

poets. Following Tanaka Tatsuya's research on Shunman, Carpenter describes this artist's pilgrimage to Ise to visit Motoori Norinaga and the surimono-like album print he produced to commemorate the occasion, which included a headnote and poem by the leading *kyōka* poet of the early nineteenth century, Yomo no Magao (whose own *kokugaku* connections will be the subject of Chapter Five). Carpenter then proceeds to describe the nature of the *kokugaku* influence on surimono, in terms of poetic approach, materials and even imagery, finding in surimono "a quintessential National Learning print aesthetic." In so doing, Carpenter suggests, but never quite makes explicit, the political implications of the surimono movement, which has typically been treated only as an aesthetic practice of well-off bourgeoisie. Other possible political implications of the uses of the past in surimono are explored by Lee Bruschke Johnson in the 2000 catalogue Surimono: Poetry & Image in Japanese Prints, which Carpenter assisted in producing. Johnson's essay, though tentative in its conclusions, seeks to define surimono as a practice with an imperial restorationist agenda, following developments in intellectual discourse of their day. She analyzes not only the imagery on surimono, but also its language, and particularly its frequent mentioning of the emperor, in this regard, concluding that surimono "contained veiled references to the political situation."²⁴⁷ In attempting to define the broader social and political implications of surimono, I will have opportunity to return to Carpenter's and Johnson's ideas, and to seek some connection between them.

That the old paradigms of approaching surimono as an offshoot of *ukiyo-e* and *ukiyo-e* as a type of art print are still encompassing research today, despite some resistance against them, can be seen even in the work of new scholars. In her essay on surimono and *kyōka* anthologies in the 2005 Hokusai and His Age for example, a refreshingly new voice in surimono studies, Kobayashi Fumiko, begins with a

²⁴⁷ 184

promising pronouncement of the literary value of surimono,²⁴⁸ the boldness of which unfortunately almost immediately peters out, not prompting her to re-evaluate the surimono form in any truly significant way (except vis-à-vis *kyōka* anthologies). Although she acknowledges the work of Kira in her second paragraph, Kobayashi proceeds as though she had absorbed none of its implications, continually failing to link the uses of surimono for *kyōka* back to their clear models in *haikai* practices. Her description of the emergence of *kyōka* surimono, although superbly detailed and rich in references, makes no mention of earlier *haikai* works, and undervalues non-illustrated pieces, leading her to “corroborate the generally held view that illustrated *kyōka* surimono had their origins in picture calendars.”²⁴⁹ Such an agonizing conclusion puts her back exactly in the same absurd position as Forrer, a quarter century earlier, fumbling awkwardly with the “extra-large [sic] format,”²⁵⁰ which Kobayashi attempts to explain as the result of how surimono “came to be used [sic] to showcase and publicize the literary activities of the various *kyōka* groups as collective entities.”²⁵¹ Kobayashi thus falls right back into the perspective of surimono “from the point of view of the history of *ukiyo-e*” that she interrogates in her opening line. This failing is apparent in her otherwise superb discussion of an early surimono series, until now assumed illustrated solely by Hokusai, although Kobayashi attributes to it

²⁴⁸ “Surimono have for the most part been studied from the point of view of the history of *ukiyo-e*, yet they have a literary dimension deserving further study as well....Despite the obvious literary motives of this special genre of *ukiyo-e* [sic], researchers in the history of early modern Japanese literature, even poetry specialists, have given them only scant attention.” I have focused on this essay, rather than Kobayashi’s more detailed, specialist articles in Japanese, precisely for the general, definition-oriented approach she takes to surimono here.

²⁴⁹ 160. Kobayashi emphasizes “illustrated” as she describes an earlier set of unillustrated *kyōka* surimono, made for *tsukinami* sessions in the manner of unillustrated *haikai* surimono (although she seems unaware of this connection). These must be displaced to connect *kyōka* surimono with *egoyomi*. There are, in fact, no grounds *but* the centrality of *ukiyo-e* in the definition of surimono for doing so. Why else would one, earlier, unillustrated album be dismissed in favor of a later, illustrated one as the site of origins?

²⁵⁰ Being the standard surimono size for most of the eighteenth century, these grand sheets cannot be described “oversize” (161) or “extra-large” unless one makes *egoyomi* the norm.

²⁵¹ 160. The absurdity of “came to be,” for what was in fact the original purpose of surimono, rises from the false and presumptive placement of *egoyomi* at surimono’s origins.

designs by other artists. Her conclusion that the uniformity of design in this set “helps demonstrate that surimono series must have been produced not at the workshops of individual artists but the publisher’s/printer’s studio” is wonderfully refreshing and important, but she falls back onto the old artist-centered structure in assuming, without explication, that Hokusai injected “his own distinctive style of visual punning” into these designs.²⁵² Whatever her objections to the *ukiyo-e* tinted lenses through which surimono have been seen, Kobayashi is ultimately unable to remove them herself, giving images and artists priority, and only appending poetry and poets as ‘also important.’ Nevertheless, Kobayashi’s assertions of the literary value of surimono, their equivalence with anthologies,²⁵³ and the overriding importance of a creative coordinator other than the artist in the production of surimono are all important advances, however much they remain—self-contradictorily at times—in the old paradigms of approach.

In sum, contemporary writings on surimono have managed to some degree to shift the old conception that surimono are merely deluxe, privately made versions of commercial *ukiyo-e* prints, by stressing the literary background of these pieces and the unique nature of their text-image relationships. The importance of poetry and poetic practices in the creation and shaping of surimono has been universally acknowledged, and no one would now argue, as Hillier and Forrer once did, that these pieces can be legitimately treated only in reference to their imagery. But surimono as a form (under that name) is still generally assumed to fall within the field of *ukiyo-e* studies,²⁵⁴ an approach that has profoundly influenced the manner in which they are treated and

²⁵² 166, 163

²⁵³ Particularly New Year anthologies, whose place Kobayashi convincingly proves surimono sets took. But the relation between New Year anthologies and *haikai* surimono had already been described by Kira, a point Kobayashi does not mention.

²⁵⁴ Differently named, *haikai* surimono fit under the study of *haikai ichimaizuri* and are treated for the most part in isolation from *ukiyo-e*, except when they explicitly have *ukiyo-e* illustrators (Masanobu, Hokusai, Toyohiro, Toyokuni etc.).

prevented acknowledgement of their full history as a unique form, which, initially at the very least, has nothing to do with *ukiyo-e*. Moreover, because *ukiyo-e* is, in general, still assumed to have been produced as a form of pictorial art, rather than as a commercial practice (woodblock printing as a technology of reproduction, not an artistic medium), the analysis of surimono inevitably treats them as works of art, attempting to evaluate their importance in this field. This approach has led, despite the valuable work on text-image interaction, to a continued privileging of surimono designers as central, as well as an emphasis on pieces with extraordinary pictorial and surface effects, rather than literary complexity in reference to imagery. There is still much work to be done, consequently, in exploring the literary aspects of surimono's emergence and development, the anthropological and sociological ramifications of surimono practice, as well as the connections of surimono's content to movements in intellectual history and political consciousness. These are the subjects I will attempt to take up in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

Chapter Two:

Background and Origins: The Emergence of Surimono from Poetic Traditions

If the blind spots, gaps and contradictions in the paradigms of surimono definition and interpretation described in the previous chapter can be assigned to any single cause, this must be the lack of understanding of the origins, development and full historical range of surimono.²⁵⁵ Remarkably, because surimono are still identified almost exclusively with *ukiyo-e*, as one of the sub-categories of Japanese printmaking as an art form, there remains to the present a long-held but erroneous assumption that the surimono genre developed out of pictorial calendar prints (絵暦・*egoyomi*), particularly those privately commissioned *egoyomi* made from 1765—though in fact the direction of formational influence runs in precisely the opposite direction. This identification of calendar prints as the foundations of surimono began at least with von Seidlitz in 1897,²⁵⁶ and received its fullest elaboration in Forrer's *Egoyomi and Surimono* of 1979, which went to unusual lengths to establish this theory as standard. In the 1995 study of the Wright Collection, the 2000 *Surimono: Poetry and Image in Japanese Prints* and the 2005 *Hokusai and his Age*, this understanding of the origins of surimono persists, along with some consequent confusion as to how to separate

²⁵⁵ Although as a contributing cause, leading directly to the exclusive vision that has so limited the historical view, one must also consider the *commercial* context in which Japanese historical artifacts were marketed and defined in Europe as art objects, whatever their original function may have been. To maintain this definition, which allowed for a higher markup of certain Japanese goods according to the European valuation of art, prints that did not fit the contemporary mode of 'art' were rejected as inferior pieces and expelled from vision. It is according to these systems of selective importation and aesthetic connoisseurship that surimono became defined in Europe and America primarily according to deluxe *ukiyo-e* illustrated *kyōka* pieces, although *haikai* surimono were as readily available in Japan, and at times even "infiltrated" European books on Japanese prints. See for example, Strange's *Japanese Colour Prints*, plates vii and xlv, precisely the kind of work that caused von Seidlitz to critically question Strange's "sense of artistic values" in his *A History of Japanese Colour Prints*, 27.

²⁵⁶ An earlier reference in Japanese, suggesting that this version of surimono's origins may have been "common knowledge" in the Meiji Period, can be found in the preface to dealer Hayashi Tadamasa's surimono albums, hand inscribed by himself in 1889. But these were privately held albums, and von Seidlitz's the first publicly presented account I have found. Various Tokugawa Period writings (particularly those of the nineteenth century), quoted already in Chapter One, suggest a close connection between *egoyomi* and surimono, and some confusion as to how to separate them (with the phrase *daishō surimono* to reference calendar prints, for example) but none go so far as to position the Meiwa *egoyomi-kai* as the origins of the surimono form, as Seidlitz did.

surimono and *egoyomi* as genres, if they should be separated at all.²⁵⁷ A separate genre issue, which has plagued Japanese surimono studies, though hardly yet troubled surimono scholarship in the West, is the limited definition of *haikai ichimaizuri* (俳諧一枚刷), single sheet *haikai* prints (essentially *haikai* surimono), which places these works appropriately within poetic practices, but blocks vision of their historical link with the development of *kyōka* surimono. The only way out of these circumscribed points of view is to define surimono as a form subordinate neither to a particular artistic practice (*ukiyo-e*) nor to a particular poetic practice (*haikai*) but as a structure of printed communication and symbolic exchange that makes use of a variety of stylistic and literary systems. To capture the nature of this structure, it is essential to view the entire range of surimono history, not the form in relation to any particular period or approach, and thereby to grasp its essential, underlying principles, whatever the vagaries of its manifestations in relation to the trends of particular places, times or groups. Simply put, the formats, layouts, images, ideals, methods of exchange, papers and pigments of surimono change with its poetry over time, but the basic impulses guiding the creation and exchange of these works, as well as the requirements for their core content, remain, for the most part, static, allowing us to define the nature of a surimono genre both in, and transcending, the movement of time.

Relating the full history of surimono, from origins to its last vestiges in the twentieth century, and perhaps even its survival to the present in homemade or

²⁵⁷ Commercial *egoyomi*, which were printed in the first half of the eighteenth century, have never been identified as part of the genre of surimono, but because the privately printed *egoyomi* from 1765 on blends in with surimono so easily, having a similar lightness of coloring, rich paper and effects, and preference for classical themes, the genres have not been properly differentiated. In fact, I will show in Chapter Four, nineteenth century *kyōka* surimono are deeply influenced by *egoyomi*, and there is a transitional stage—what I call the hybrid calendar, or *egoyomi* with verse—which stands as a bridge between privately printed *egoyomi* and *kyōka* surimono. But surimono do not simply emerge from *egoyomi*, as the conventional argument has it, this genre standing as but one of its influences. In fact, privately printed calendars in *haikai* surimono well precede 1765, and even most commercial versions of the form, while *kyōka* surimono borrow as much from the structures established by *haikai* surimono, which I will in this chapter show have a deep legacy in the formats, layouts and uses of Japanese poetic presentations.

commissioned *nengajō* (年賀状),²⁵⁸ involves bringing together a decades-old divergence between studies of surimono within and outside of Japan, each with its own blind spots that makes recognition of the other difficult. Some attempt at bridging this divide, albeit in superficial form, was made in an exhibition entitled *Suijintachi no okurimono: Edo no surimono*,²⁵⁹ designed by Asano Shūgō and held at the Chiba Museum in 1997. Asano, an art historian specializing in *ukiyo-e*, drew from the work of Kira Sueo and his colleagues to bring together a representative selection of *haikai* surimono—including very early pieces that, to the time of the exhibition, had been studied only by *haikai ichimaizuri* specialists—with the later *kyōka* surimono familiar to *ukiyo-e* researchers, including works as early as 1708 and as late as 1935 (both *haikai* surimono). With samples of surimono from different periods and places, in varying formats and image styles, Asano was able to connect disparate works and suggest that the genre was much older, and indeed, much larger than the subcategory of *ukiyo-e* it had been assumed to be. His introductory essay affirms this variety, dividing surimono first into chronological periods, and second into types. Though a major watershed in surimono studies, Asano's essay and exhibition structure suffer from the limitations of space inherent in such projects; he devotes no more than a single paragraph to *haikai* surimono, picture calendars or any of the seven periods of surimono history he outlines. Moreover, each of these sections is purely descriptive, with no attempt to analyze the nature of surimono development, the relations between types of surimono, or the origins, influences and semiotic functioning of the genre. In

²⁵⁸ The practice of creating and exchanging New Year greetings with personal messages and pictures, sometimes with great wit, continues to the present day, but I believe we confuse the issue by referring to these as directly related to surimono. Once poetry as a mode of social communication dropped out of common practice, surimono as a form died, although the New Year practices to which surimono had partly appended itself continue unbroken. These practices were not born with surimono, however, preceding them by many centuries. Therefore, we should see surimono, as poetic presentation sheets, merely “riding on” New Year customs as their occasional impetus, in fact only one of many such seasonally based occasions for exchange in some periods of practice, and not intimately bound with such customs in origins or historical destiny.

²⁵⁹ The alternate English title was “Cultivated Gifts: Surimono of the Edo Period”

terms of proportion, likewise, the exhibit heavily favored nineteenth century *kyōka* surimono, as the most elaborately printed and beautiful specimens, though according to Asano's own historical outline, *haikai* surimono practices outweighed those of *kyōka* by at least four to one in longevity. Additionally, non-illustrated surimono were not generally considered in the exhibition or essay, although they form an important part of surimono history and *haikai ichimaizuri* studies, and are absolutely essential to understanding the birth of the form. Despite this unfortunate discrepancy between the historical-mindedness of his essay and the aesthetic focus determining the content of the exhibition and works considered, which sought to retain an impression of surimono as a form of pictorial art, Asano's achievement with the Chiba exhibit and catalogue was groundbreaking, startlingly redefining the understanding of surimono that had dominated *ukiyo-e* studies until that time. Though works on surimono in the West have been painfully slow in absorbing the implications of Asano's approach, the conclusions that the practice of surimono is much older than previously suspected, and much larger than the field of *ukiyo-e* itself, are unavoidable, and in part the inspiration for this current project. Subsequent chapters, therefore, will be an attempt to fill in with far greater detail the sketch of surimono history Asano has suggested, relying on both sides of the "surimono scholarship divide" for specifics, adding non-illustrated surimono to complete the gaps in Asano's summary, and offering new hypotheses about the relationship between the various kinds of *haikai ichimaizuri*, *egoyomi* and *kyōka* surimono. In presenting this detailed history, I hope to suggest the nature of surimono over its full range of development, and thereby to redefine this genre, particularly in terms of its enduring literary basis.

Emergence of a Genre: The First Instances of Surimono

Although, in the history of any form, what appears as a first emergence is never truly the beginning, tendrils trailing into the recesses of the past and earlier, related forms, the surest ground on which to begin the exploration of a genre is with its initial extant, accepted examples, for the trail forward and back can best be followed from there. For surimono, the oldest work currently known [Figure 7]²⁶⁰ is a New Year's piece (*saitan surimono*) in long, horizontal format (横半切 • *yoko-hangiri*), containing 11 verses by seven different *haikai* poets, primarily from Edo. The work is dated by its title, *Genroku jūgo mizunoe uma saitan* (元禄十五壬馬歳旦)²⁶¹ to the beginning of 1702, though of course it was designed and produced late in the previous year. The leading poet and commissioner of the work, Hattori Ransetsu 服部嵐雪 (1646-1707)—an early and important disciple of the greatest of *haikai* masters, Matsuo Bashō 松雄芭蕉 (1644-1694)—and his own best pupil, Takano Hyakuri 高野百里 (1666-1727) have three poems each on the print, while five other disciples and friends are represented with single contributions. These are arranged, one to a neatly brushed vertical line, as follows: an opening *hokku* by Ransetsu, followed by another from Hyakuri; then, after the topic heading “*Seibo*” (歳暮 • “Year End Gift”), a short set of three linked verses by Rodō Hyōka 露堂氷花 (active 1688-1736), Hyakuri and Ransetsu in that order; and finally, after the topic “*Dō*” (同 • “The Same [*Seibo*]”) individual *hokku* by Ransetsu, Chōsō,²⁶² Tōkō,²⁶³ Jorei,²⁶⁴ Sesshū²⁶⁵ and Hyakuri at

²⁶⁰ *Haikai ichimaizuri* (Itami: Kakimori Bunko, 1991) 10, no. 1.

²⁶¹ “Dawn of the Horse Year, Genroku 15”

²⁶² Chōsō: dates unknown, first appears with Kikaku in a 1700 memorial volume for the 7th anniversary of Bashō's death, but edited two works with Ransetsu in 1705. After the deaths of these masters, he seems to have joined the Sentoku Group, appearing in several works with them, often joined by Jorei.

²⁶³ Tōkō II, as the first Tōkō, Bashō's pupil Enomoto Shijō of Osaka (1659-1708), gave up that name in 1697. There is also no place notation beside Tōkō's name, and his position on the print would not be in keeping for the leading Bashō disciple in Osaka. This Tōkō is possibly the same who appears in a 1737 work with Senkaku and Tantan, and thus would seem to have had later Kyōto connections.

²⁶⁴ Sekiuchi Jorei, dates unknown. A pupil of Kikaku who appeared on several early surimono. See Appendix I for details.

²⁶⁵ A completely unknown poet.

the close. The order of poets suggests hierarchy, but there is something of a leveling effect in the varying sequences, with the master Ransetsu coming last in the first *seibo* section of links, and the lead pupil last in the second of *hokku*.²⁶⁶ This sequence of the poems, in fact, owes much to the practices of *haikai* linked verse, and particularly the seasonal customs of *haikai* poets at the New Year, as we will see later in this chapter.

Moreover, although individual *hokku* predominate over linked verses in this print, as they will in later *surimono*, a close examination of the content reveals that its emotional core is in the first, linked *Seibo* section. This opening *hokku* by Ransetsu, though grand in scope, cannot compare with the personal messages and lively interplay of the later links.

<i>Shikai nami</i>	On the waves of the four seas
<i>Uo no kikimimi</i>	The fish perk up their ears, listening
<i>Ake no haru</i>	For the opening of spring ²⁶⁷

By contrast, the power of the following linked verses is largely extra-literary, based on the personal circumstances of the poets at the time this work was created, facts that would have been well known to its recipients. The opening *hokku* in the links was submitted by mail by the only poet on the print not living in Edo—Hyōka, who is identified as writing from Ōtsu (大津), just outside of Kyōto. His verse reads:

<i>Miidera ni</i>	At Miidera Temple
<i>Kashira mo sorazu</i>	Heads aren't shaved
<i>Toshi no haru</i>	Springtime of the year ²⁶⁸

²⁶⁶ The positions of poets on *surimono* is important, though the way of reading these positions changes over time. With early, *haikai* works, the first poet is typically the lead figure in the project. Later, with *kyōka* works, the first poets are the commissioners, but the last poet is the one with seniority and prestige, often paid an honorarium for his contribution, but not always an active participant in the work's design. Some generic final poems in *kyōka* *surimono* are recycled by these masters from work to work, for example, though the leading *kyōka* poet in this study, Yomo no Magao, took an active role with his witty contributions.

²⁶⁷ 四海波魚の聞耳明けの春.

²⁶⁸ 三井寺にかしらもそらず年の春. The second line has no subject marker, and could be more prosaically translated as “I don't shave my head,” or “monks don't shave their heads”—but I have preferred to use a subject-free passive construction, to allow for another possible reading, that no one joins the order in the happy time of the New Year. This latter meaning too emphasizes the loneliness of

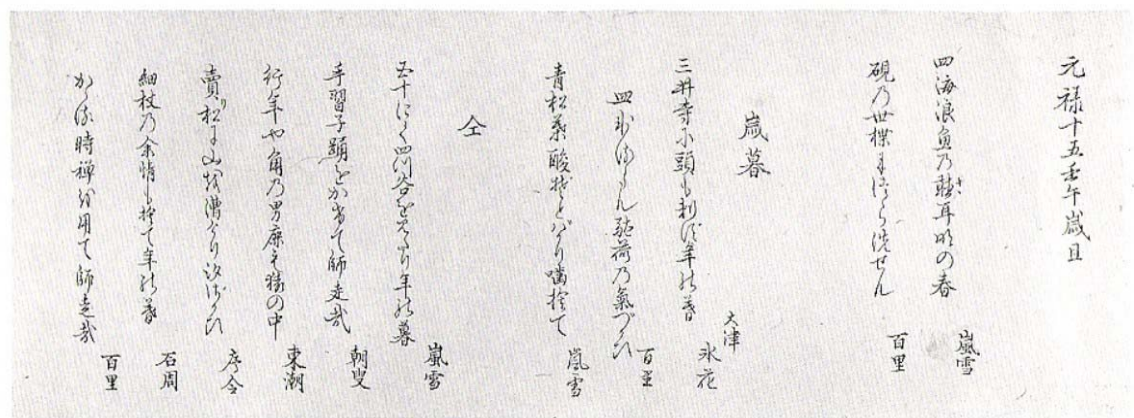


Figure 7: *Genroku jūgo mizunoe-uma saitan* (元禄十五壬馬歳旦). Dawn of the Horse Year, *Genroku* 15, A 1702 New Year *Nagaban* Surimono, commissioned by Hattori Ransetsu, with poems by himself, Rodō Hyōka, Hyakkuri and others. Kakimori Bunko.

the monks, and their separation from the social world. In my interpretation, I prefer to see Hyōka observing the behavior of his fellow monks during his first New Year in the temple, noting that, although there are no secular celebrations, small changes happen here too, and that the emergence of hair, like sprouting grasses, marks the return of spring. There is also, however, a personal note in the theme that may emphasize the first person reading: if the cutting of hair at the New Year is a way of making a fresh start, letting go of the past, Hyōka notes that he is not capable of doing so, still attached to events of the previous years. This simple verse thus has multiple layers of signification.

Hyōka had been an intimate member of the Ransetsu circle in the 1690s, but after the sudden death of his wife and child, had left his home in Edo, ultimately taking orders at Miidera in 1701. His verse is both wistful and mildly self-mocking, pointing in part to the sublimated desires of monks (and himself in particular, as a newly ordained monk) to participate in the secular world at the New Year. Ransetsu could have taken Hyōka's submission and simply added it to the list of contributors, but instead decided to answer this moving verse, together with Hyakuri, creating a poetic conversation even from afar. Hyakuri's *waki* (脇 • the “supporting” or second verse in a sequence) links to Hyōka's by mentioning plates, which are ritually flung from cliffs at certain Kyōto temples as a way of releasing evil influences.²⁶⁹ His message is that Hyōka, burdened with sadness, has a shoulder to lean on, though he humbly compares himself to a packhorse's bags:

<i>Sara nosururan</i>	Pile your plates on me--
<i>Dani no kizukai</i>	The solicitude of a horse's load ²⁷⁰

Ransetsu adds the *dai-san* (第三 • “third verse”) connecting directly to Hyakuri's second by extending the image of the horse, but primarily carrying through his thoughts in relation to Hyōka's. His comment here is on the bitterness of all life, a common motif in Buddhist scripture, as though urging Hyōka to keep strength in his vocation as a priest, even at this “tempting” time of year. For such bitterness, he states, is even in the pine, auspicious symbol of the New Year for which Hyōka expresses longing:

<i>Aomatsuba</i>	The green pine needles
<i>Sui zo to bakari</i>	Sour! He thinks over and again
<i>Kamisutete</i>	Biting and spitting them out ²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ “Plate” also link back to the preceding verse by referring to the bald pate of the head, as in the “sara” of the Kappa monster. Thus the initial *sara nosururan* could suggest “place it on your plate” or “let your hair grow,” though the subsequent line contextualizes this as the thought of a packhorse's load.

²⁷⁰ 皿のするらん駄荷の気づかい。

Following this performance, the other verses are anti-climactic, incapable of matching the emotional intensity of these dialogues between master, fellow disciple and former pupil, all coming together in poetic unity despite a vast division in physical and psychological space.

For our first detailed look at the contents of a *haikai* surimono, this work is hardly representative, for the serious and even melancholic notes in this poetic exchange comprise an extreme exception to the usual, bright and happy mood that dominates New Year surimono. We will find a counterpart for this work later, however, in surimono made to mourn or commemorate the anniversary of someone's passing. Moreover, although the deeper tones of this piece are off-key for New Year surimono, the connections made in this work, between master and disciples, poets and friends, givers and recipients, largely through private statements and references shared by them all, are highly indicative of the nature of surimono. Although primarily literary works, utilizing standard poetic forms, diction and imagery, the purpose of a surimono was not merely aesthetic—in the sense of an isolated pronouncement of individual worldview and corresponding artistic approach—but also communicative, a work in which, to a major extent, one sacrificed one's personal predilections and mood for that of that of the group or recipients. Poetry produced as a means of communication has for this reason largely been dismissed from the field of literary studies in its modern construction, which is based largely on the principle of individual depth, the ability and drive of a literary genius to stand above society and convention—for the communicative aspect of poetry in fact requires the submission of

²⁷¹ 青松葉吸ぞとばかり嚙捨てて。 The theme of food links with the plates of the previous verse, though it is the packhorse eating here, chewing on the green of the tree it is tied beside or beneath. *Kami-sutete* is a rather unusual formulation, seemingly in contrast with the implied message punning with “abandon the gods,” though if we consider these as the natural *kami* of the New Year (as opposed to the world-rejecting Buddhas), the message is consistent.

the individual to a common, social code, and typically a rejection of purely private interests for the sake of the other, the recipient. From the modern point of view, simply put, there is nothing terribly interesting about a poem of congratulations, no private depths to plunge, no interiority or soul to summon, for everything is on the surface, following a code that is social, and for that reason, seen as superficial. There is also the problem of audience, for Ransetsu's reply was meant for Hyōka and the poet-friends with whom he shared the print, or a congratulatory poem directed at the emperor and court, but not at us, not for the sake of the general reader. As viewers outside the situations of these poems, we miss their meaning; there is too much external background that needs to be supplied to understand them, thus making them something other than "literary." But one of the goals of this project is to show the benefits of treating surimono as literature, even if this means challenging the principles by which the work of literature is currently evaluated. In fact, I will argue, there is a certain kind of depth in many of these "social cards"—to employ for a moment an outmoded description of surimono—in spite of their public function. In this respect, Ransetsu's 1702 *saitan* surimono is a most appropriate starting point.

In terms of physical format, *Genroku jūgo mizunoe uma saitan* is unillustrated, but its size, half of the standard *ōbōsho zenshiban* (大奉書全紙版 • "large announcement paper, printed full sheet") is quite unusual among early surimono, almost all of which utilize full sheets, making it seem likely that this piece once had a second panel that was trimmed away.²⁷² The work survives, in fact, as part of an

²⁷² This was the sad fate of many illustrated surimono, as the Europeans and Americans who bought them found the textual half, upside down when these large sheets were fully opened, to be distracting. This practice, along with the breaking up of surimono albums by dealers that continues to this day, has robbed us of clues as to the original historical context of these pieces, and stand as examples of the perils historical artifacts face on the commercial market. In the case of this work, however, it would be very unusual for only the text sheet to survive, for these were the part typically discarded. This oldest extant surimono could also be the first example of the format Forrer called a *yoko nagaban* (more properly *yoko hangiri*), though it would be extremely unusual as such. Most likely it was originally an *ōbōsho zenshiban*, which had a blank panel cut away. (See *Haikai Ichimaizuri* (Kakimori Bunko, 1991), nos. 5, 7 and 11 for early examples of *ōbōsho zenshiban haikai* surimono with blank panels).

assembled scroll of eleven single sheet New Year's prints, all with *haikai* poetry, and trimming was a common occurrence in such productions. Three New Year's surimono with *haikai* also survive for the year 1710—including the first illustrated works—one for 1711, two each for 1712, 1713 and 1715, three for 1717, seven for 1718, three for 1719 and so on. These pieces are all in the uncut *zenshiban* format²⁷³, folded once horizontally so as to be equivalent to the *yoko-hangiri* on either side of the fold, and then twice or three times again vertically so as to fit into an envelope. The result, when one of these surimono is fully opened for display—as they were in fact never meant to be²⁷⁴—is a large, rectangular work, subdivided evenly into either eight or twelve rectangular panels by fold lines, with text and illustrations oriented so that the outer edges of the paper form their top and the central axis created by the horizontal fold line their bottom, meaning that half of the fully opened print always appears upside down. This complex format, present in surimono from its very inception, was the standard for most of the eighteenth century, though with some limited, but important exceptions before the 1770s. The speed and regularity with which surimono assumes this form, with no apparent process of development and little experimentation with other layouts, suggests immediately that the format was based on an earlier model, already standardized, as I will reveal shortly. Nevertheless,

²⁷³ *Ōbōsho zenshiban*, large, fully printed sheets, were approximately 37.5 by 50 cm, plus or minus a few centimeters for individual variation. *Kobōsho zenshiban* were a bit smaller, approximately 30 x 45 cm. The 1710 examples shown are in this slightly smaller (though still grand sized) format. It bears keeping these sizes in mind for comparison with the paper formats of presentation *kaishi*.

²⁷⁴ This statement concerning their handling will soon be supported by an examination of the model on which this format was based. Period use of this model makes it clear that these sheets were no more intended to be completely unfolded in regular use than a child's folded paper toy taken apart. Just as future generations might "dissect" a paper airplane by flattening it to show its construction, contemporary exhibits and photographs unfold surimono to display their full printed surfaces, and thereby essentially treat them as "dead" objects, looking at them in a way they were never intended to be seen. Whatever the convenience of such treatment, we should remain aware that this was not how prints in the folded format were originally used, and as a "living form," were kept folded across their horizontal axes. Having said this, however, exceptions do arise as experiments from within, and as challenges to, the conventions of the form itself, later even creating a new (single planed/unfolded) standard in one geographic locale.

despite this singularity of paper format, there is a great deal of individual variation within the sheets of early *haikai* surimono.

In the illustrated works of 1710, for example, the methods of dividing text and image between panels are quite distinct, as are the styles of calligraphy, which differ again dramatically from Ransetsu's *Genroku jūgo mizunoe uma saitan*. *Hōei shichi kanoe tora* (宝永七庚寅・“Year of the Tiger, Hōei Seven,” Figure 8) opens with a long headnote titled “Ganjitsu” (元日・New Year's Day), followed by an illustration of a plum tree, both signed Kōka 幸貨 (dates unknown, active c.1690-1730). Only then is there a group of poems, thirteen individual *hokku* on plum blossoms. Flipping to the other side of the print (as one would when it was properly folded), the next section begins with the subject title *Takara-biki* (宝引・“Treasure-Draw,” or New Year's lottery), followed by an illustration of a bonsai pine with other small prizes on its stand, and then eleven additional *hokku*. The work ends with two additional sections, a single *hokku* from the winner of the main prize, and two additional under the heading *Seibo* (“Year End”), followed, in smaller lettering, by the publisher of the print, Izutsuya Shōbei of Teramachi, Kyōto (寺町二条上ル町みつや庄兵衛版).²⁷⁵ The second extant 1710 work, *Hōei shichi ki saitan* (宝永七季節歳旦・“Dawn of the Season of the Seventh Year of Hōei”, Figure 9), also begins with a head note, which immediately breaks the layout's sequential flow by pointing the recipient's attention to the rear of the print. Here, in indigo ink, is a full panel illustration of the *Takarabune* (宝船), the “treasure ship” that the Seven Gods of Good Fortune (七福神・*shichifukujin*) use to deliver luck at the New Year, a long haired sea turtle, auspicious

²⁷⁵ There will be more to say on Izutsuya Shōbei and his role in publishing *saitanchō* and early surimono late in this chapter.

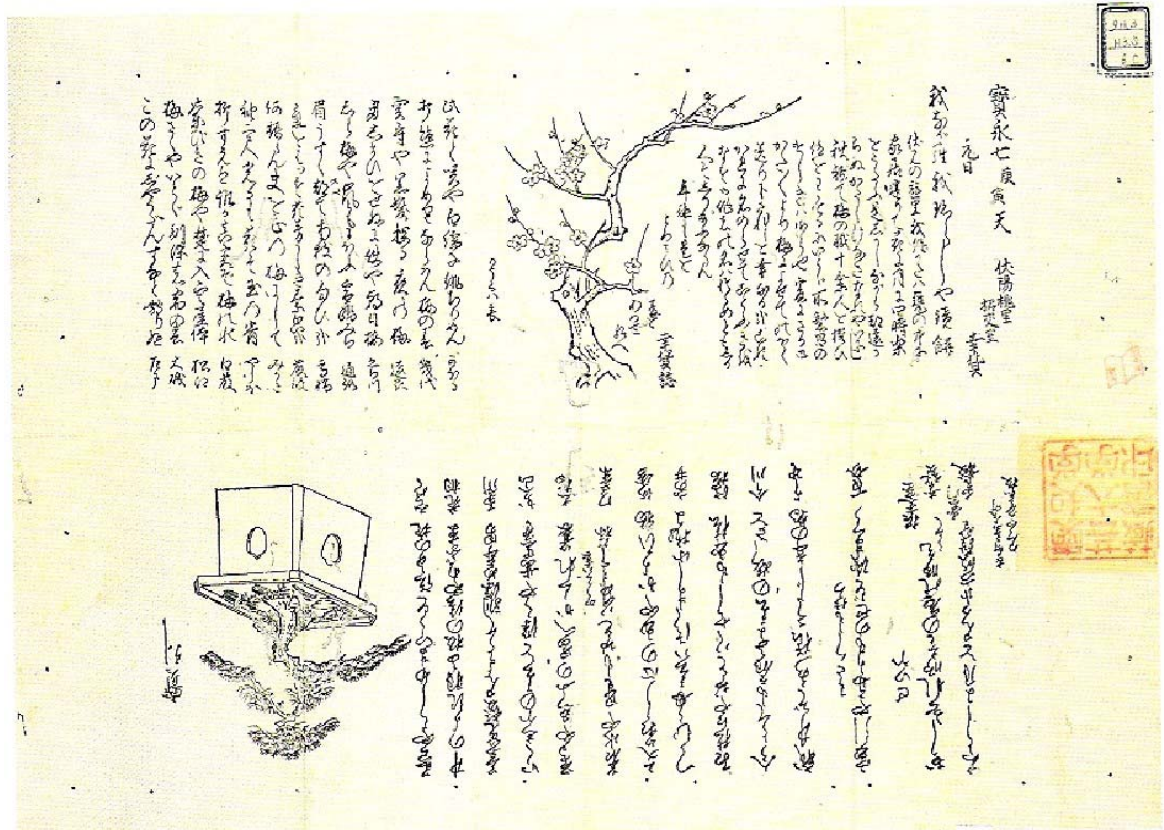


Figure 8: *Hōei shichi kanoē tora ten* (宝永七庚寅天). A *kobōshozenshiban* surimono for New Year 1710, with verses by 27 poets taking the pseudonyms of courtesans and images of a plum tree and lottery prizes, including a bonsai pine. Commissioned and illustrated by Shōkōshitsu Kōka of Momozato, Fushimi. Aichi University of Education.

symbol of longevity, in the ocean beside it. Formally integrated around the illustration is a thirty-one syllable poem, a *kaibun* (回文・palindrome)²⁷⁶, reading:

<i>Nagaki yo no</i>	From a long night's
<i>Tō no neburī no</i>	Slumber
<i>Mina mezame</i>	Everyone's awakened—
<i>Nami nori fune no</i>	The fortunate sounds
<i>Oto no yōki kana</i>	Of this wave-riding ship! ²⁷⁷

The headnote playfully instructs the recipient as to how to use the image, placing it beneath the pillow to obtain auspicious dreams, thereby auguring great things for the future.²⁷⁸ This is then followed by seven individual *hokku* for seven different topics, all brushed in large, distinctive calligraphy. As we might expect from the number seven, each topic and poem describes one of the gods of good fortune: *Kozuchi* (小槌・Daikoku's "Mallet"), *Fukuro* (袋・Hotei's "Bag"), *Tsuru* (鶴・Fukurokujū's "Crane"), *Biwa* (琵琶・Benten's "Lute"), *Tsue* (杖・Jūrōjin's "Staff"), *Hoko* (鋒・Bishamonten's "Sword"), and *Akame* (赤目・the "Red Eyes" of Ebisu's fish). This surimono, thoroughly auspicious from start to close, is commonly known as "*Rantai saitan*" (蘭台歳旦) as it was commissioned by the Hizen *daimyō* Omura Rantai (1670-1738),²⁷⁹ an avid *haikai* poet who was active in the development of early surimono. His name appears, after the headnote, as the first poet on this print, the

²⁷⁶ Palindrome poems seem to have been especially popular on New Year prints, and are often found in later *kyōka* surimono. In a loose way, the pleasant surprise of finding a verse that reads the same from back to front as front to back replicates the ideas of completion, cycle and perfect repetition that underlie the New Year experience. Such verses too, by becoming more than single directional units, have a sense of fullness, completion and self-containment that is aligned with the New Year ideal.

²⁷⁷ なかきよのとうのねふりのみなめさめなみのりふねのおとのよきかな. This poem is not original to this piece, but in fact appeared as a convention on images of the treasure ship in the Tokugawa and Meiji Periods.

²⁷⁸ It was commonly said that sleeping with a print of the *takarabune* under one's pillow on the first night of the New Year would bring auspicious dreams. The best dreams included Mt. Fuji, a hawk, and an eggplant, according to one explanation because all of these things were "high" (*takai*, also meaning expensive, as eggplants were pricey in winter.)

²⁷⁹ True name, Sumitsune. Born the fourth son of the fourth lord of Bizen, Suminaga, he was adopted into the family of his elder brother, the fifth lord, in 1710, and thus made next in line of succession. He served as the sixth lord from 1712 to 1727. He became involved in Edo *haikai* circles during his periods of alternate residence in the capital.

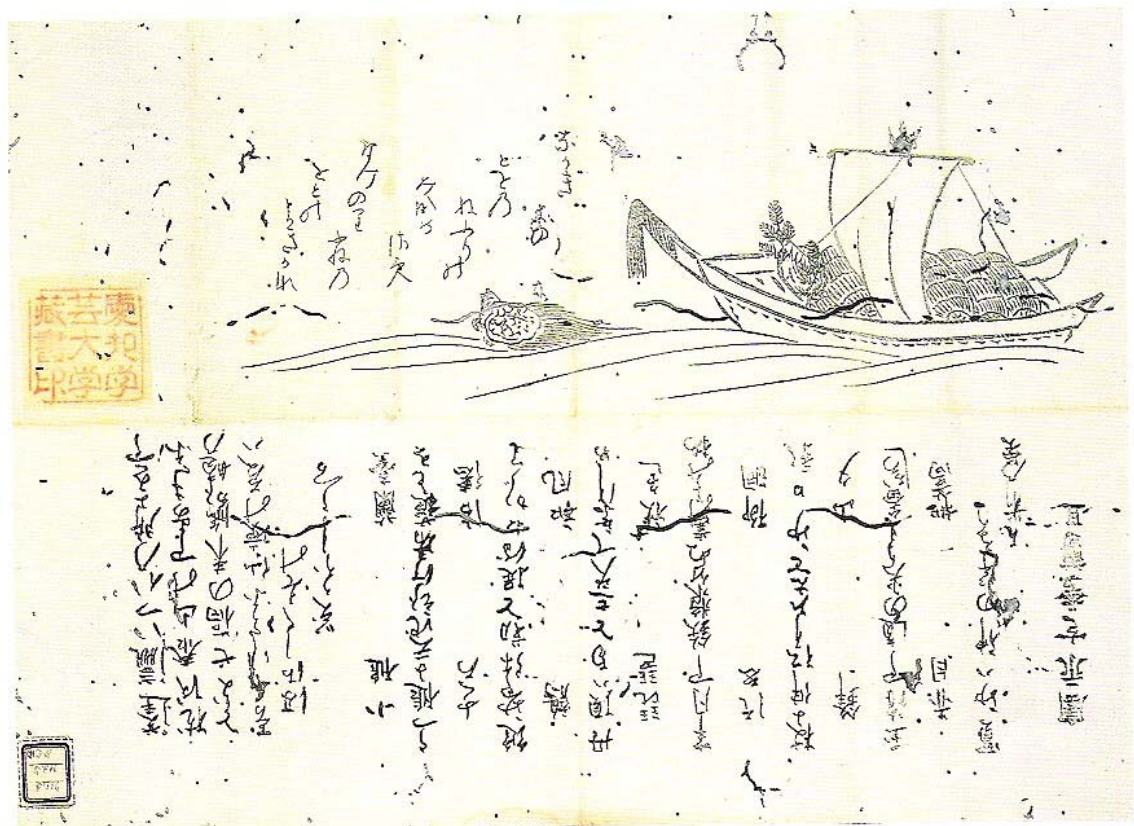


Figure 9: *Hōei shichi ki saitan* (宝永七季歳旦). A *kobōshozenshiban* surimono for New Year 1710 with illustration of a treasure ship and long haired tortoise, commissioned by Ōmura Rantai. Aichi University of Education.

earliest of some 15 extant surimono bearing his name. These works include not only this earliest extant illustrated surimono, but also the first experiments in both two and three color printing in the single sheet format in Japan, among other innovations such as the use of gold and silver flecked paper in surimono.

Early surimono, as these examples suggest, can be characterized by a consistency of external format, but high degree of variation in internal content, that suggests its early commissioners seem to have been competing for originality within a set arena. Though the size, type and manipulation of paper appears to be borrowed from a form already developed and standardized, what would appear on that paper and how it would be arranged was not yet fully determined; rather, the makers of these early works were creating the ideals of the genre as they went along, building on each other's ideas. Even what would seem like the constants of content—titles, subject lines and *hokku*—were subject to some variation, as with Kōka's pictorial topic headings or Rantai's insertion of a poem in *tanka* form on a *haikai* print. And some sections of early surimono did not contain groups of individual *hokku* at all, but substituted short, three line segments of linked verse in a 5-7-5, 7-7, 5-7-5 syllabic pattern. An example of this type can be seen in *Hanjian Tantantei Kyōhō nijū saitan*²⁸⁰ (半時庵淡々亭享保二十歳旦, Figure 10), in which, after a headnote from Tantan, three of his disciples join forces in creating four sets of linked verse on individual topics, each set with three verses. Bumpa opens the first sequence, entitled “Bird Bright” (鶏明・*Keimei*) followed by Shūdō and Chi'nae. Chi'nae then opens the second sequence on “Blue New” (青新・*Seishin*), with Bumpa and Shūdō following. The third and fourth sequences change the order again: Shūdō, Chi'nae and Bumpa on the theme “Gentle Breezes” (徐風・*Jofū*), then, in a break of the “last comes first” pattern of the first three sequences, Shūdō, Bumpa, and Chi'nae on “The

²⁸⁰ “Dawn of the Year Kyōhō 20 for Hanjian Tantantei.” Matsuki Tantantei (1674–1761).

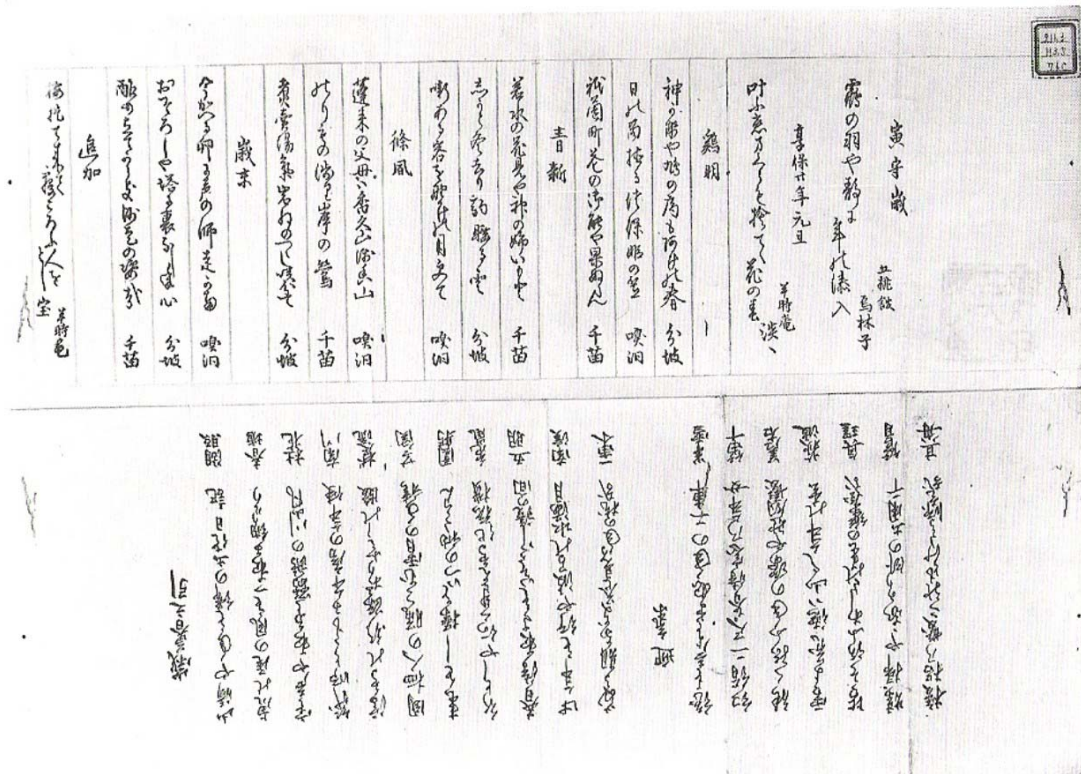


Figure 10: *Hanjian Tantantei Kyōhō nijū saitan* (半時庵淡々亭享保二十歳旦). An *obōshozenshiban* surimono for New Year, 1735. Commissioned by Hanjian Tantantei, with *mitsumono* and *hikitsuke* sections. Aichi University of Education.

Year End” (歳末・*Saimatsu*). An afterword by Tantan follows the fourth sequence, and only when one turns the surimono to the rear do the usual sets of *hokku* appear, under the typical themes “Year-End Gifts” and “Welcoming Spring.” These details of order in the layout of the print, especially its opening sequences, are emphasized for reasons that will become clear when the root practices from which surimono emerged are examined, but for the moment, this piece can stand as an example of the variety found in early surimono.

For those familiar with the accepted idea in *ukiyo-e* studies that the earliest extant surimono with poetry date to the mid-1780s, these early works, just a fraction of the pre-1736 surimono extant,²⁸¹ come as a revelation, but also as a mystery. How did this genre spring up, fully formed? Why did it immediately take so unique and complex a configuration, with large paper sheets folded into two long panels opposite in orientation? What was the precedent on which this format was based, and how did it itself come into being? Similarly, why were groups of up to several dozen poets involved in creating such grand sized New Year’s gifts? Was the broad participation necessitated by financial reasons, and if so, why did *haikai* poets not simply make smaller, more personalized and affordable prints? Or did these works serve another purpose other than individualized greeting cards? And why *haikai* poets at all? Just who in fact were their makers, and who their recipients? What were their motivations for bringing surimono into being and continuing to make them for so long? These mysteries, intimidating as they may seem at first glance, can be solved when we seek the origins of surimono not in *ukiyo-e* picture making but in the customs and material practices of Japanese poets. And once the centrality of poetry in the development

²⁸¹ A recent survey of the collection at Aichi Kyōiku Daigaku alone (taken from Ōmura Rantai’s former library) are dated or attributed to the Kyōhō Era or before. See Okamoto Masaru “Aichi Kyōiku Diagaku-zō” in Kira Sueo (ed.), *Edo Bungaku* 25 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 2002), 60-80.

of surimono is realized, our understanding of the history, nature and definition of this form must alter as well.

The first clue to the origins of surimono lies in the fact that the early works of this genre are primarily New Year's pieces, although later *haikai* surimono, influenced by this poetry form's close attention to seasonal movements, were issued at various times of the year. In fact, of the 75 pre-1736 *haikai* surimono in the Aichi Kyōiku Daigaku collection, exactly two-thirds (50) have *saitan* (歳旦 • “dawn of the year”) or a year designation directly in their titles, while a number of the remainder are also clearly for New Year related events, such as the “year end,” “new spring,” “lottery” (福引 • *fukubiki*) or calendar for the coming year (暦 • *koyomi*). There are, however, already several pieces for *hatsuuma* (初馬 • the first horse day of the second month)²⁸² and *jōshi* (上巳 • the first snake day of the third month, now associated with *Hinamatsuri* (雛祭 • festival of the dolls, popularly known as “girl's day”), as well as announcement surimono for the year's first *noh* chants and a *haikai* meeting, and commemorative pieces for important anniversaries and events. But the overwhelming prevalence of *saitan* surimono, particularly in the earliest works,²⁸³ suggests that surimono at their origins bear a close relation to traditional New Year's rituals and presentation greetings. It will serve well, then, to look back and examine the history of such practices in some detail, especially in relation to the traditions of Japanese poetry. For it is not the New Year in and of itself, but rather the New Year as constructed by poets and their poetry, that bears a close relation to the emergence of this new form, surimono. Therefore, it is with poetry and its various applications that we must begin.

²⁸² A festival celebration at Inari Shrines, where the gods were said to descend for the day.

²⁸³ At least 57 of the first 65 surimono in the Aichi Kyōiku Daigaku collection are New Year related.

A. In the Context of Poetry, Part 1: Material Practices
Poetry as Elegant Communication: The Art of the Poetic Letter

At the broadest level, discussion of the origins of surimono must begin with the uses of poetry in early and pre-modern Japan. For in Japan, until the modern period, the romantic image of poetry as a purely intimate expression of self, written in secrecy as an outlet for one's innermost feelings, seems never to have gained currency. Although poems composed in solitude and expressing deep-felt emotions are common, of course, even this poetry also had explicitly outward, communicative, ritual and public aspects from its first recorded uses. The art of the elegantly coded poetic communication, for example, dates as far back as at least the Nara court, and if sources from that time can be taken literally, in oral form into prehistory. In the *Kojiki* 古事記 ("Records of Ancient Matters," compiled c.712), there are numerous examples of both deities and mortals communicating with exchanges of poetry (贈答歌・*zōtōka*), such as Okuninushi's courtship of Nunakawahime, or argument with his consort Suserihime no Mikoto.²⁸⁴ Although there is certainly a large degree of artificial arrangement in this text, with contemporary or near-contemporary folk songs placed in a sacred context and projected back into the depths of time, some of the 'singing telegrams' and poetic dialogues of the latter ages do have the ring of recorded event. But regardless of their historical veracity, the contextualizations of poetry in the *Kojiki*, *Nihonshoki*, various *Fudoki* and the *Manyōshū* clearly demonstrate that the poem in Japan has long had a life beyond its existence as an isolated object for silent aesthetic scrutiny. Poetry—or perhaps more accurately, song—has had communal, interpersonal and public functions in Japan apparently since its very origins. From the *utagaki* (歌垣) songfest—an ancient gathering at which males made amorous proposals to females with verse, and they responded with their feelings in kind—to the

²⁸⁴ For examples in English, see Edwin Cranston *A Waka Anthology. Volume One: The Gem-Glistening Cup*, (Stanford University Press, 1993) 7-12, as well as 17-18, 21-22, 26-27, 41.

uta awase (歌合せ) poetry contests and linked verse parties of the Heian Era and after, poetry has frequently been the basis for public gatherings, alignments and relations between people. As Helen McCullough states, “it was incumbent on every cultivated man and woman to employ verse as a medium of communication in daily affairs—a graceful alternative to letters and communication [in prose].”²⁸⁵ Far from being primarily a solitary medium for the expression of one’s private thoughts, then, as in its romantic definition, poetry in early Japan was most often composed with an audience—in most cases, a very particular audience—in mind, before whom the poem will be presented, and to whom the poem is directed, with a particular purpose in mind.

The communal or public nature of poetry might seem something of a given for orally recited or sung poetry, but it is hardly less the case for poems in written form in Heian Japan. Written poetry could have a public life as *shikishi* poetry cards pasted onto screens used to decorate palaces, on formal poetry presentation sheets (*kaishi*), or in an imperial anthology, an official record of those poems acknowledged finest. Moreover, the possibilities for interpersonal, communicative uses of poetry, largely amorous but also friendly or political, actually expanded with the increase of written expression, as one did not have to be in the immediate presence of the recipient to transmit the poem. For this reason too, the written form of the poetic communication also brought into play other, extra-linguistic aspects of expression. Gesture, facial expression and the tone or tempo of the voice might add or detract from an oral recitation, but in a written poetic message calligraphy, the choice of brush, method of inscription and darkness of the ink, the selection, scent and folding of the paper, the

²⁸⁵ (1985), 3. Poetry was a means of communicating with not only others, but the past as well, as present-day verses often referred to well-known models. Such understated communication, based on mutually shared knowledge and a similar stance towards the past, implied unity between the writer and the recipient—a factor that will be seen later in *surimono*.

accompanying seasonal gift, and even at times the nature of the appointed messenger could all be read as revealing the sensitivities and proclivities of the sender. At a time when women were sequestered, and kept out of contact with all men but their family members, the poetic letter was not only a means of making an amorous proposal—*utagaki* moved indoors—but also of discovering if one's counterpart was of a character suitable for such a proposal. Both women and men were judged by their poetic messages, and every aspect of the communication counted.

By the mid-Heian Era, as Ivan Morris elegantly describes, letter writing “had come to be regarded as an art in its own right, whose products, ephemeral though they might be, were judged according to the most critical standards.... A person's skill in the art of correspondence could make or break his entire reputation.”²⁸⁶ Therefore:

A great body of artistic convention accompanied the preparation and sending of a letter. First it was necessary to choose paper of the proper thickness, size, design, and colour to suit the emotional mood that one wished to suggest, as well as the season of the year and even the weather of the particular day. The calligraphy, of course, was at least as important as the actual message, and often the writer had to make numerous drafts with different brushes before producing the precise effect he wished. The nucleus of the text was usually a thirty-one syllable poem whose central image was some aspect of nature that directly symbolized the occasion. Having finished his letter, the writer would carefully fold it in one of the accepted styles. The next step was to select the proper branch or spray of blossom to which the letter must be attached.²⁸⁷

Nowhere is this meticulous process of composing the perfect poetic communication described in more detail than in the *Tale of Genji* (源氏物語), in which the variety of paper types, colors, scents, folds and ink applications are described and critiqued by the characters who view them. The following quote from

²⁸⁶ Morris, *The World of the Shining Prince: Court Life in Ancient Japan* (New York, London, Tōkyō: Kodansha International, 1994) 187

²⁸⁷ Ibid, 187-188. One might also consider how the attached object, often seasonal, was transformed to image in surimono practice, as the work itself became the seasonal gift.

the *Ukifune* 浮船 section reveals how the nature of one's poetic greeting was taken as a direct reflection of one's character, and the tensions that came with that fact.

[Lord Kaoru's letter] was folded straight, on plain white paper.
The writing had no flourishes or trills, but showed distinction.
His highness' [Niou's] letter, long and intricately knotted, gave
equal pleasure.... "Oh no, I could not possibly answer..."²⁸⁸

Kaoru's prim, white, formal note is presented as the epitome of his straightforward, serious persona, against which the flashier and more playful Prince Niou's letter stands out as its antithesis. The recipient of these letters, Ukifune, finds herself paralyzed in her attempts to respond, and consequently remains a mysterious character, whose depths the reader (like her suitors) is continually frustrated in trying to "read." The written, poetic communication in the *Tale of Genji*, it can thus be said, is one of the primary means by which the personal qualities, values, character and true feelings of the figures appearing in the romance are made known to one another, and to readers.

Whether this was an accurate reflection of Murasaki's time, as Morris assumes, or in part a literary technique, it is certain that in the Tokugawa Period the art of letter writing assumed an obligatory status as the most basic skill of a cultivated person. The *ōraimono* (往来物) genre of textbook, used to teach children at temple schools (寺子屋 • *terakoya*), was to a major extent a guide to writing letters, while books of etiquette taught various manners of inscription and paper folding for different occasions, disseminating knowledge of practices previously the exclusive property of those families associated with the imperial court.²⁸⁹ Moreover, with the courtly traditions of poetry having been broadly appropriated and revised through the

²⁸⁸ *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*. V.17: *Genji monogatari* (6) (Shogakkan, 1989), 360.

²⁸⁹ See Ishikawa Matsutarō *Ōraimono no seiritsu to tenkai* (Yūshōdō 1988), for the definitive study of the *ōraimono*. A two volume dictionary by the same author and publisher contains multiple examples of these educational texts, illustrated. See also Keene (1976), 29

practices of *renga* and especially *haikai* linked verse, the poem retained its place as an essential ingredient in an elegant letter, or perhaps, more aptly put, the structure of the poetic letter provided an opportunity for immediately sharing one's own poems with others, stimulating composition and exchange.²⁹⁰ For *surimono*, this classical model of the poetic greeting forms an integral part of the background and structure in which these works were to be read, as can be seen physically, in the emphasis on paper quality, folds, and elegant calligraphy, substantively, with refined poetry that subtly referenced the immediate season and occasion, and formally, in the manner in which these sheets were distributed and appreciated. The illustrations on *surimono*, in this context, can also be seen as virtual stand-ins for the actual items often appended to a classical Heian letter as seasonal gift: a flower, a branch, a cage with birds or insects, or a small human artifact of some sort.²⁹¹ Moreover, viewed in the mode of the poetic letter, though in truth usually inscribed, illustrated, prepared and printed by experts who were paid for their services, *surimono* could be distributed as a reflection—also in this sense virtual—of one's own refined character. Such a possibility emerged in the new application of an advanced technology, woodblock printing, to a form whose meaning and interpretation had been established in relation to an earlier, more labor intensive and self-expressive technique, handwriting. As a mass-produced 'group letter,' *surimono* could be distributed to as many as several hundred friends and acquaintances, while yet retaining those special, personal qualities of thoughtfulness, admiration, and respect, as well as projection of one's personal qualities, that the poetic letter entailed.

²⁹⁰ See, for example, *Haijin no tegami* (Seishōdō shoten, 1993).

²⁹¹ An excellent example of this practice, related to *surimono*, is the artificial pine with poem attached sent from Uji to the house of Prince Niou at the New Year, found near the opening of the *Ukifune* section of *Genji monogatari*. See *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*. V.17: *Genji monogatari* (6) (Shogakkan, 1989).

Yet, in this aspect, being directed at a broad group rather than a single, intimate acquaintance, surimono diverges from the poetic letter, a fact that is reflected in its form and content. A distinction must be made here between types of poetic presentation, which like *waka* poetry itself can be split into two kinds, public and private. McCullough gives the most succinct definition of this distinction in *waka*:

A public poem can be defined as one composed in the knowledge, expectation, or hope of a substantial audience; a private poem as one that was meant for no more than one or two of the author's acquaintances.²⁹²

In terms of presentation, the poetic letter was thus essentially a private mode, directed at a single party, though sometimes with awareness that others would view it. More formal, public presentations of poetry could be made by using fancier *kaishi*, *tanzaku* or *shikishi*, variously sized, single sheet pieces of paper or later stretched silk, on which a poem, with or without headnote, would be inscribed.²⁹³ Unlike private letters, presentation *kaishi*, *tanzaku* and *shikishi* were not usually folded,²⁹⁴ but offered directly and formally to important figures and sites of power, including emperors, politicians, judges and sponsors at poetry contests, courts, shrines and temples, in expectation of being displayed and seen. These sheets were thus typically on thick, rich paper or silk covered paper boards, often decorated with flecks of silver and gold, cloudy or marbled colors, and sometimes even small illustrations. It goes without saying that surimono, mass-produced works intended to be seen by a wide audience,

²⁹² 1985, 3

²⁹³ *Shikishi* are roughly square-shaped sheets (later also paper boards with stretched silk), typically either 28 x 25 or 22 x 19 cm, and *tanzaku* long, thin strips of paper or board, established at roughly 6 x 36 cm. from the Kamakura Period on, while the shape of the paper *kaishi* was rectangular, and though typically very large, varied in size from period to period. All three of these formats, but particularly *kaishi* and *shikishi*, directly influenced the shapes, sizes and layout of surimono. Other material formats for the display or presentation of poetry, of less importance to surimono, include fans, hanging scrolls and screens.

²⁹⁴ An important exception was made for the *renga kaishi*, as will be seen. It is this folded *kaishi* that provides the format for early surimono.

and not generally directed towards a specific individual,²⁹⁵ fall into the category of public presentation, whatever their debts to the form of the poetic letter. This influence will be most clearly seen in an examination of the medieval, *renga*-influenced format of *kaishi*, on which early surimono are based, and again in the transition of surimono formats towards smaller scale *kaishi* and *shikishi* in the nineteenth century, as well as in the formal styles of calligraphy, thick paper, and silver and gold effects used mainly in *kyōka* surimono. It serves our understanding of surimono, therefore, to look more closely at the history and development of these forms.

Poetry as Power and Influence: The Formal Poetic Presentation Sheet

McCullough's division of public and private *waka*, used thus far to structure my discussion of poetic presentations, breaks down to some extent when we examine the content and ritual functions of the poems presented. For it is in some apparently "privately" directed presentation poems that one often finds poetry with what might seem to be the most "public" function, poems that praise, congratulate, or wish long life, health and safety to the recipient. Although aesthetic quality is never lost as the aim of the expression, even in such 'presentation poetry' (詠進の歌・*eishin no uta*), these extra-literary, ritual purposes take the 'private' communication into the communal realm. And in fact, as the object of these poems was most often a figure or site of power, chiefly the emperor, they assumed a public, even official, function, ritually maintaining hierarchies and keeping the realm in order. Simply from the political perspective, the recipients of such poetry had an incentive to share it publicly with others, displaying or anthologizing it as a means of showing how they were

²⁹⁵ This is not to say that the content of some surimono was not directed *at* a specific individual, usually a fellow member of a poetry club, in the manner of a "roast" before friends. For an example, see my explication of the sea horse surimono from the *Uma-zukushi* series in the Introduction. But the content was not *for* the specific individual only, rather being directed at the group of his peers.

looked up to and appreciated, and thereby again supporting the status quo.²⁹⁶ In offering such presentation verse, then, the composer was no doubt aware that his or her poem, though directed at a single individual, would likely have a life beyond this, particularly if in relation to the imperial family. Public and private, then, are not such neatly segregated categories as they are in the modern divisions of social life.

As a corollary to this point, when inscribed on one of the formal presentation formats and bestowed as an offering to an institution, even poetry that was not at all “public” or presentational in nature had social capital, as a sign of the respect and admiration a cultivated person had endowed, and the work itself material value, as an object of aesthetic excellence, as well as for the fine paper, silk and other rare materials employed. Unlike poetic letters, these were not writings to be read in secrecy, then tucked away or destroyed; rather, poetic presentation sheets survive in the treasure houses of temples, shrines, major families and the imperial court. The material forms of poetic presentation take a place, therefore, alongside other, non-poetic works, such as manuscripts, sutras and picture scrolls that were dedicated to institutions as works of high value. And as such, they were an honor not only for the recipient, but for the presenter as well, whose name was thus subsequently displayed and preserved. It is according to this structure that we find emperors not only as the targets of presentation poetry sheets, but as their makers as well.

Presentation poetry sheets could take many forms, but the requirement of all of them was that they be on relatively thick paper, suitable for passing from hand to hand and for display.²⁹⁷ In the broad historical view, most of these were single surfaced

²⁹⁶ Published examples of these verses can be found in the seventh section of the *Kokin wakashū*, “Felicitations” (賀歌).

²⁹⁷ Without resource to a comprehensive history of the forms of poetic inscription in Japan, I have drawn this overview together from diverse sources. For *kaishi*, I have relied largely on Furuya Minoru’s excellent history of its development and transformations over time, “Kaishi no kenkyū: Shoshiki no seiritsu to hensen” in *Tokyo Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan Kiyō* Vol. 11 (Tokyo: Tokyo Kokuritsu Hakuritsu Bijutsukan, 1975), 153-215, supported by his “Kumano kaishi no kenkyū” in

sheets, without layers or folds, and so immediately apprehensible, though books, scrolls and folded formats do enter the range of possibilities at various times. Of the three formats of presentation poetry sheets introduced above, it is difficult to determine precisely which is oldest, but the one that came to be most widely used on formal occasions was *kaishi* (懷紙). *Kaishi*, the literal meaning of which (“breast pocket paper”) suggests its original use as a handkerchief or tissue paper, likely developed into a medium on which to inscribe poetry simply through its close physical proximity to the poet.²⁹⁸ Struck by the need for expression, the poet would reach for the nearest, most readily available material, which in many cases happened to be a sheet of *kaishi*, folded and tucked into the kimono breast. *Kaishi* as tissue paper, however, a use it retained until modern times, should not at all be confused with the kind of *kaishi* that developed as a formal medium for the inscription of poetry.²⁹⁹ Here, the meaning of *kai*, or *futokoro*, “bosom” or “heart,” with implications of feeling (思う・*omou*), was metaphorical rather than literal, thus “heart paper.” And whereas

Tokyō kokuritsu hakubutuskan bijutsushi No. 182-183 (May-June, 1966). For *renga kaishi*, I have drawn from Ijichi Tetsuo’s *Renga no sekai* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1967) and for *haikai kaishi* from Kira Sueo (1989) and Haruo Shirane (1998), among others. For *tanzaku* and *shikishi*, I have employed a combination of dictionaries for overviews with articles and books containing primary sources. The former include the two *Nihon koten bungaku daijiten* (Iwanami Shoten, 1983, and Meiji Shoin, 1998), *Waka bungaku daijiten* (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1962). The latter include especially *Tokubetsuten: Shika no sho* (Tōkyō National Museum, 1980), *Tokubetsuten: Nihon no sho* (Tōkyō National Museum, 1978), “Writings in Kana Script; Correspondence” from The Written Image: Japanese Calligraphy and Painting from the Sylvan Barnet and William Burto Collection (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002), 94-120, Horie Tomohiko’s “Jōdai kana no bi” in *Tokyō kokuritsu hakubutuskan bijutsushi* No. 15 (June, 1952) and “Shikishi mango” in No. 86 (May, 1958) of same, Kyōto National Museum’s exhibition catalogue *Kana no bi* (1992), Yoshiaki Shimizu and John Rosenfield, *Masters of Japanese Calligraphy, 8th-19th Century* (New York: Asia Society, 1984), and pertinent (poetry-related) sections from Komatsu Shigemi’s 25 volume *Nihon shoseki taikan* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1978-80).

²⁹⁸ The word appears in this context in *Utsubo* and *Genji monogatari* (see the *Kōbai* section) for example, the latter being a perfect example of how tissue paper could function as letter or poetry paper in a pinch. In later times, *kaishi*, also pronounced *futokorogami* to distinguish it from its formal use in poetry presentation, continues to appear in this practical sense in literature, particularly in reference to the tea ceremony (where its use to wipe the cup after drinking was obligatory) and the pleasure quarters. See *Nihon koten bungaku daijiten* (Iwanami Shoten, 1985) 550 for additional examples.

²⁹⁹ An eighteenth century text, *Honchō sejidanki*, playfully explicates this distinction for its readers, contrasting *futokorogami* as “*hanagami*” (鼻紙・“nose paper”) with *kaishi* as “*hanagami*” (華紙・“flowery paper”).

kaishi/futokorogami in its former use was heavily folded, relatively thin and plain, presentation *kaishi* utilized thick sheets of rich, creamy paper, typically *danshi* (檀紙 • “stage paper”), *hōshogami* (奉書紙 • “presentation paper”), the heavy *sugiharagami* (杉原紙) that closely resembled it, and the speckled *torinokogami* (鳥の子紙 • “baby bird paper”—so named for its egg shell texture and appearance). In the most elaborate cases, found largely in later examples, the surfaces of *kaishi* rippled with color or sparkled with flecks of silver and gold, a far cry from ordinary tissue paper. Like the kinds of paper it utilized, however, the aesthetic ideals of *kaishi* were quite various, changing with the genre of poetry inscribed, individual preferences, and the standards of the time. In order to comprehend the relationship between *kaishi* and *surimono* fully, it will pay to give some attention to the development of this form.

The earliest extant *kaishi*, signed by the famed calligrapher Fujiwara Sukemasa 藤原佐理 (944-998) and dated Anwa (安和) 2 (969), contains Chinese-style poetry (詩 • *shi*), and is the only work of its particular kind to survive from the Heian Era. *Kaishi* with *waka* poetry, however, are extant in larger numbers from the final years of the Heian Period, into early Kamakura. These include works dated 1178, 1179, 1181, 1183 and so on, suggesting that the use of *kaishi* was quite prevalent at this time.³⁰⁰ Several collections of *kaishi*, bound into book format by the institutions that received them, also survive from this turbulent era: *Ippongyō waka kaishi* 一本行和歌懷紙 (1181) with 15 different examples, including *waka* by Saigyō 西行 (1118-1190);³⁰¹ *Kumano kaishi* 熊野懷紙 (1200), dedicated by Emperor Go-Toba 後鳥羽天皇 (1180-1239) and containing more than 30 *kaishi* by himself and others;³⁰² and *Kumano rui kaishi* 熊野類懷紙 of the same year with approximately 20 additional pieces. These

³⁰⁰ *Nihon koten bungaku daijiten*, (Meiji shoin, 1998), 550.

³⁰¹ See *Tokubetsuten: Nihon no sho* (Tōkyō National Museum, 1978), no.150

³⁰² Ibid, nos. 151-154, including presentation poetry sheets by Go-Toba, Jakuren, Asukai Masatsune and Fujiwara Teika.

early *kaishi* are simpler, less decorative than others of this genre were to become later in the Kamakura Period, emphasizing fine calligraphy on rich, plain paper. Their styles of inscription are fairly uniform in the individual collections, the sheets in *Kumano kaishi*, for example (Figure 11), each containing two *waka*, brushed with bold calligraphy in three lines each, and formatted to the right margin, with any space remaining left blank. Between works and collections, however, there is some variation. Whereas Sukemasa's *Shikaishi* (詩懷紙) is vertically oriented, for example, the *waka* presentation sheets of Saigyō and Emperor Go-Toba are in the horizontal format that was to become standard, while the calligraphy and layout of verses differ in these latter cases as well. Unlike the poetry anthology, therefore, the *kaishi* medium offered poets some opportunity to arrange their work in their own style, expressing themselves visually through calligraphy and layout design in addition to linguistic signification.

The individual freedom implicit in the early uses of *kaishi*, however, gradually gave way to stricter rules of usage, resulting in standardization. Rules for the proper use of *kaishi* began to be inscribed as early as the *Fukuro sōshi* (袋草紙) of Fujiwara Kiyosuke 藤原清輔 (1084-1177) and were formalized in greater detail by Fujiwara Teika 藤原定家 (1162-1241) in his *Waka hisho* (和歌秘書).³⁰³ Summarized basically, the layout for a standard, one poem *waka kaishi* was as follows. First, the horizontal orientation of the paper was assumed. The paper size was typically an uncut sheet, though half, quarter and even one-sixth sheet formats were possible, exact measurements depending on where the paper was made. For thick, Sugihara paper, typical full sheet measurements were 33 cm. tall, 45 cm. wide, while the more formal *hōshogami* sheet was larger at about 36 x 54 cm.³⁰⁴ By convention, one poem *kaishi*

³⁰³ Furuya (1975), 193.

³⁰⁴ *Nihon koten bungaku daijiten* (Iwanami, 1985), 550. If these sizes sound familiar, it is because we have encountered them already in the *kobōsho zenshiban* and *ōbōsho zenshiban* of early surimono.

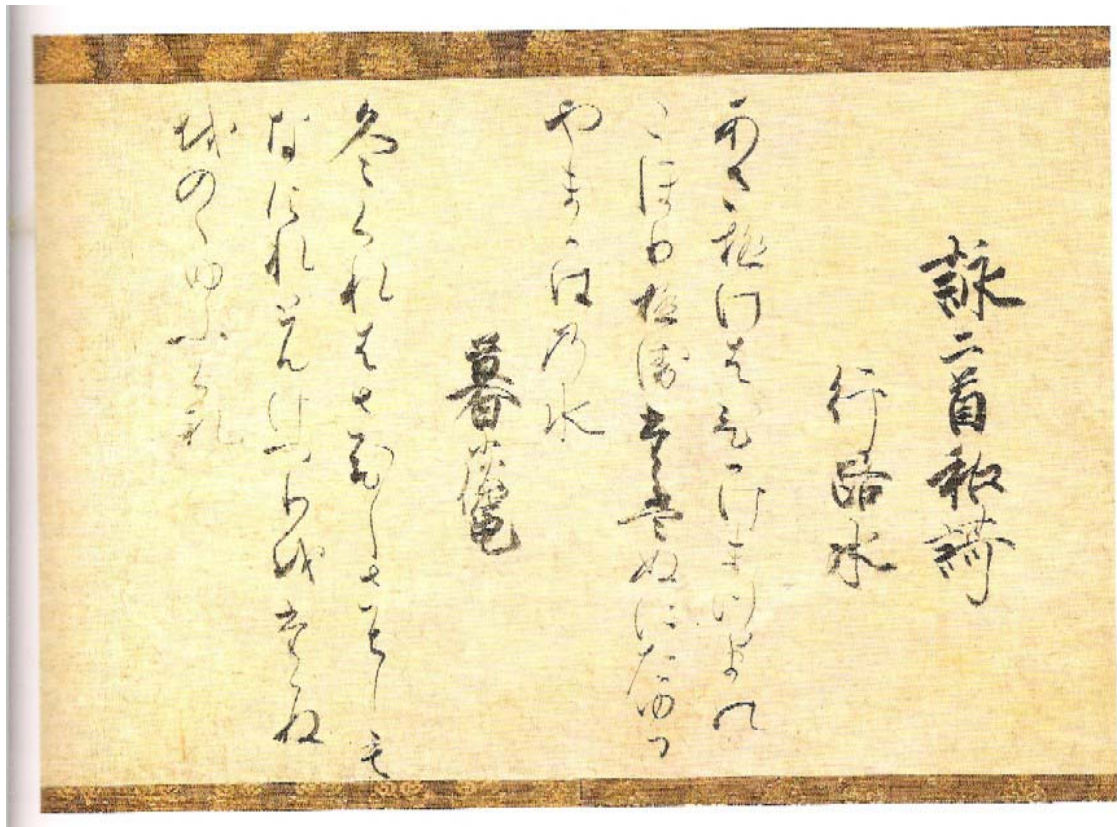


Figure 11: *Kumano Kaishi* (熊野懷紙). A presentation poetry sheet with two *tanka* verses.

were considered to consist of seven columns. The first pair on the far right, termed *hashi-tsukuri* (端作り • “making the edge”), was reserved for recording the *kisho*—季書 • “season writing”—or more accurately the date of composition, generally by the season and reign year of the poetry gathering or ceremony for which it was made.³⁰⁵ The third column, called *isho* (遺書 • “rank signing”) was where the author identified him or herself. The fourth through seventh columns were reserved for the poem itself, which was inscribed according to the rules of *sangyō sanji* (三行三字 • “three columns, plus three characters”), typically with a nine syllable column first, followed by a ten syllable column, another with nine, and the final three syllables on a line of their own. In the case of a two-poem *kaishi*, the rule was *nigyō shichiji* (二行七字) two columns of twelve syllables each, followed by a third with seven.³⁰⁶ The final columns of three (or seven) syllables, moreover, were to be written in grass style kana. Some of these rules, however, were suspended for so-called *nyōbo kaishi*, or *kaishi* by women, which could dispense with the official *hashi-tsukuri* and subject title. Further variations on the established form of *kaishi* emerged, moreover, in the bitter rivalry between the Nijō 二条 and Kyōgoku-Reizei 京極 • 泉冷 lines in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, which resulted in different families trying to distinguish themselves by challenging the fine details of poetic practice.³⁰⁷ Nevertheless, despite small changes, the basic form of *waka kaishi* remained intact, and continued, albeit alongside dramatic new uses of *kaishi* for the popular forms of linked verse (*renga* and *haikai no renga*), into the Tokugawa Period.

³⁰⁵ There is a clear carryover of this practice in early surimono, which also begin with the date marked clearly on the rightmost margin.

³⁰⁶ *Waka bungaku daijiten* (Meiji Shoin, 1962), 268

³⁰⁷ For example, the fifteenth century poetic study *Shōtetsu monogatari* (Shōtetsu 1381-1459) describes the heresy of the Nijō brand of *sangyō goji* (three column, five character) *waka kaishi*, noting that they vary from the model of Asukai Masatsune (1170-1221, compiler of the *Shinkokinshū*). See Furuya (1975).

The development of *renga* (連歌 • linked verse) as a serious practice standing alongside *waka* in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, brought about a profound alteration of the *kaishi* format, completely altering poets' approaches to these large, rectangular sheets of paper. Like *waka kaishi*, *renga kaishi* were used for recording verses at poetry gatherings, and often ritually presented at shrines and temples. The key difference was not therefore in utilization, but emerged rather from the particular nature of *renga* meetings, a typical session of which resulted in the creation of a sequence of one hundred linked verses (百韻 • *hyakuin*), with alternating sets of 5-7-5 and 7-7 syllables.³⁰⁸ Because the connections between verses constitute the very heart of the aesthetic experience in *renga*, it would not do to have individual parts divided over scores of poetry sheets, nor, as paper was a valuable commodity, would this be financially viable. To solve the problem of *renga* recording on traditional presentation *kaishi*, this large, rectangular paper was folded once horizontally, thus creating two distinct planes, front and back, each broad enough to capture a verse in one or two columns (two was standard for traditional *renga kaishi*), and long enough to record a sequence of between eight and fourteen verses. Four sheets (eight surfaces) were used to capture a complete *hyakuin*, with the number of verses (*ku*) for each surface determined by convention—eight on the first and last surface, and fourteen on each of the others. This patterned recording also aided in following *renga*'s rules for the set appearance of certain themes, such as moon and flowers, and keeping track of the

³⁰⁸ 100 verses comprised a standard *renga* session, though other lengths were possible, particularly in *hitori renga* (一人連歌 • “one man renga”), in which temporal and social constraints were absent. Built through the alternation of 5-7-5 and 7-7 verses, each verse in a sequence—except the very first and last—performed ‘double duty,’ linking to both those verses immediately preceding and following to form a standard 31-syllable *tanka* on either end. The various methods of linking, seasonal, thematic, referential, status-based, linguistic and associative, bear some connection to the “linking” of picture and image in later *surimono*, and will be examined later in that regard.

position in the sequence, which called for differing tempos, and would be apparent from the scribe's place on the pages.³⁰⁹

As with *waka kaishi*, particular names and rituals of inscription were developed for each section of the four *renga kaishi*. A linked verse session began with the scribe taking two of the four sheets of paper, laying them on a writing stand, then folding them once horizontally, and twice vertically to aid with the spacing of the calligraphy.³¹⁰ The first sheet, *sho-ori* (初折・“beginning fold”) was left one-third blank on its front right side, the second and third “folds” (二の折・*ni no ori*, 三の折・*san no ori*) were completely filled, while the last sheet, *nagori* (名残・“the remains”) was also left partly blank, on its final third on the rear side. Into these empty spaces at either end was later inserted information regarding the sequence. As the *hashi-tsukuri*, the date and place of the session, and when suitable the temple or shrine to which the work was devoted, was inscribed on the first column of the *sho-ori*, followed by the *fushimono* (付し物) or topical classification, which served as a title for the piece.³¹¹ After the last verse on the *nagori* page, the *ku-age*, an index of participating poets and the number of their contributions, was added. Then all four sheets, still horizontally folded and with the folds aligned at the bottom edge, would be bound with red and white silk thread through holes bored on the right margin, and thus made ready for presentation. A distinction can be made in surviving *renga kaishi*, however, between recording sheets (Figure 12) and final, clean copies, the later

³⁰⁹ The *jo-ha-kyū* (序破急) or “preface-development-fast” tempos borrowed from *noh*, were set to match the turning of the pages, particularly, the flipping of the first page to the rear, after the first *ku* of which the stately *jo* closed and the choppy *ha* began, and of the last page, which initiated the quick closing *kyū* section. The exact alignment of poetry with inscription here emphasizes the importance of the *kaishi* recording sheet in the practice of *renga*.

³¹⁰ The description in this paragraph follows Ijichi Tetsuo's *Renga no sekai* (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1967), 64

³¹¹ The *fushimono* was originally a directive to guide poets towards a certain unified context in the session. But as the format of *kaishi renga* recording reveals, it later became a retrospective way of characterizing what had already happened in the session, a somewhat associative title.

typically on finer paper, often with decorative effects such as marbling, colored cloud patterns or illustrations beneath the text (下絵・*shita-e*), and bits of silver and gold. The most ornate *kaishi*, in fact, are noted to be those found on the *ori-gami* (折紙・folded paper) used for *renga*, as in Figure 13.³¹²

Haikai poetry, the genre utilized almost exclusively in early surimono, developed directly out of *renga*, being initially just a looser (“haikai” as irreverent or non-standard) version of linked verse practice that did not adhere to the strict rules of diction, tone, subject matter, and methods of linking that maintained *renga* as a high, courtly art.³¹³ Initially, the term for this light, jocular sort of linked verse was *mushin renga* (無心・“without heart/concentration”) and it was practiced as a way of

winding down after a serious, *ushin* (有心・“with heart/concentration”) *renga* meeting, as well as with those patrons not quite capable of upholding the high standards of *ushin renga*. Although it could be argued that *renga*, by the very unpredictable nature of the links emerging in its production, was originally, and always implicitly, comic in potential, the efforts made to codify its practice in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries limited these possibilities by attempting to define linked verse as a serious poetic form within the courtly *waka* tradition. *Haikai* arose

³¹² See, for example, the folded, bound examples in The Courtly Tradition in Japanese Art and Literature: Selections from the Hofer and Hyde Collections (Rosenfeld, John, Fumiko and Edwin Cranston, eds.) (Fogg Museum, Harvard University, 1973), 216-219. These marbled, wave-patterned papers have a clear parallel in “drip” pattern printed *haikai* surimono such as can be found in *Haikai surimono zufu* (Seishōdō shoten, 2002) nos. 18, 99, 214, 335, 437 etc. See also the marbled papers found appropriate for the mounting of *haikai* surimono in the nineteenth century album in the Chester Beatty Library, Keyes (1985) nos. 412, 414 etc.

³¹³ The development and history of *haikai* poetry is long and complex, and for this reason, will not be focused on here, though of course those aspects of *haikai* poetics and practices relevant to surimono will be treated throughout this dissertation. For early *haikai*, see Howard Hibbitt’s “The Japanese Comic Linked Verse Tradition” in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 23 (1960 - 1961), 76-92. The most authoritative summary of the history of *haikai* in English is still found in Donald Keene (1976), Chapter 1-6 and 14-15, (11-148, 337-370), though R.H. Blyth’s four volume overview (*Haiku* (Hokuseidō, 1952)) provides a good introduction to individual poets and their poetry. One of the best descriptions of *haikai* poetics, particularly those of Bashō, is Haruo Shirane’s Traces of Dreams: Landscape, Cultural Memory and the Poetry of Bashō (Stanford University Press, 1998).

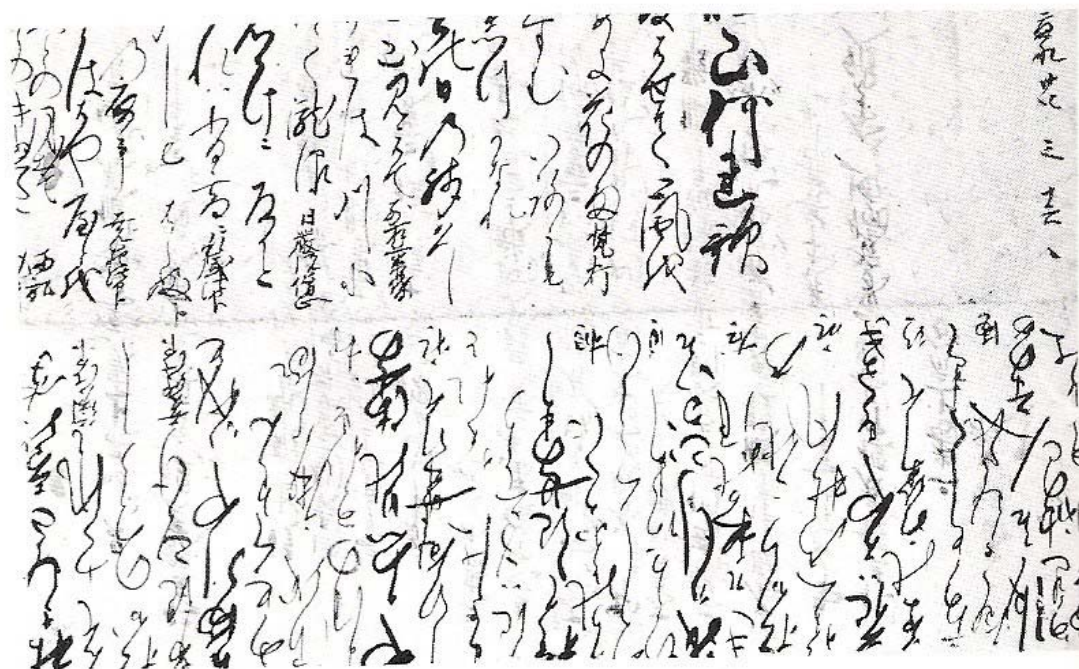


Figure 12: A renga-recording kaishi, using the central horizontal fold as axis.

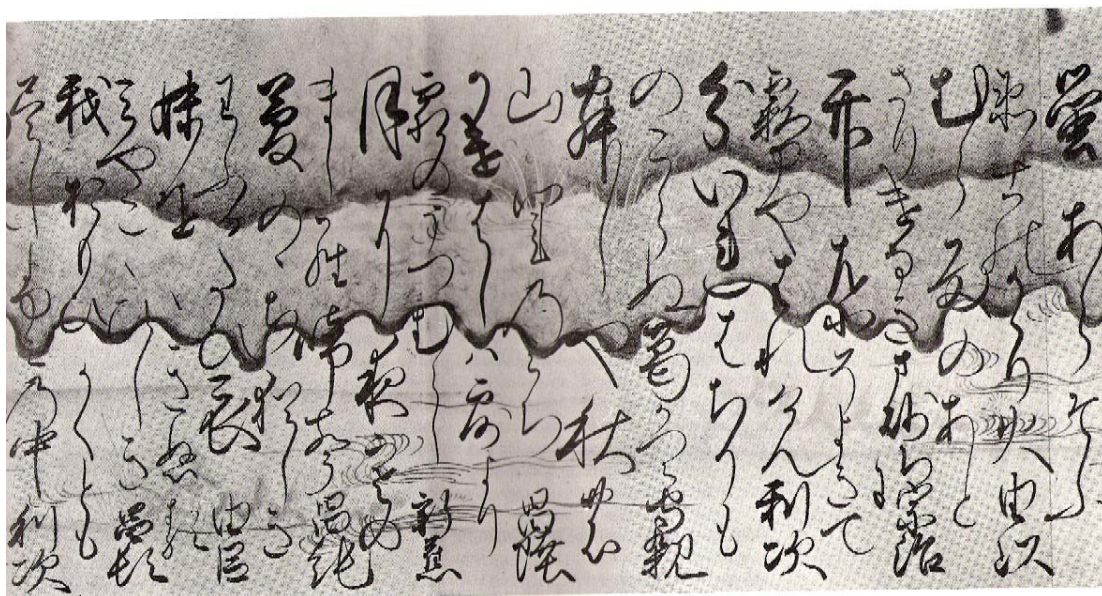


Figure 13: Presentation Renga Kaishi, with sheets folded and bound.

as a meaningful kind of poetry both as a reaction against these strictures, and, in part, because of them. The term *haikai* in fact has a long history, being used in the *Kokin wakashū* to refer to unconventional poems that diverged from contemporary standards for elegant themes, mood and poetic approach,³¹⁴ but the kind of *haikai no renga* 俳諧の連歌 that developed in the late Muromachi Period and peaked in the Tokugawa Era was of a different sort, one that thrived on the clash between the elevated language and worldview of courtly literature and the brute experiences of daily life. The bite of this jarring juxtaposition of elegance (雅・*ga*) and vulgarity (俗・*zoku*), the high and the low, which can be seen in the work of a “serious” poet like Bashō as much as in the iconoclastic comedy of early *haikai no renga* by Yamazaki Sōkan 山崎宗鑑 (1465-1553), Arakida Moritake 荒木田守武 (1473-1549) and others, raised *haikai* above the mere frivolity of *mushin renga*, and ultimately helped to establish it, at least outside the main elements of the conservative aristocracy, as a meaningful genre.

Haikai, in this sense, was not only a poetic mode, but also a means for the dispersal of the centuries old, exclusive traditions of court poetry to people outside the chosen aristocratic families—or, better put, the mode of poetry that developed when the high classical tradition met the worldview of people with a vastly different range of experience. Such opening up of the formerly guarded texts and secret transmissions of courtly literature began to some extent with the practice of *renga*, which linked verse masters carried over a vast geographic space in their travels to teach patrons, frequently local governors and military lords. Impoverishment at the fringes of the aristocracy led to a mingling of classes and knowledge, as well-born men without

³¹⁴ They form Book Nineteen of the *Kokinshū*. McCullough (1985) notes the large percentage of *kakekotoba*, pivot words or puns, among these poems, while rejecting the traditional notion that *haikaika* refers to humorous poems. She sees these poems as “flawed” according to the rules of the *Kokinshū* compilers, but interesting enough to be collected. They are, she writes, “a faithful mirror of contemporary social and cultural realities,” that is to say, a reflection of the kinds of poetry court people likely wrote in daily life, which did not always live up to the high demands of their cultural ideals (346, 481-89).

means hired themselves out as tutors for lectures and private lessons. It was through such manner of instruction, for example, that Matsunaga Teitoku 松永貞徳 (1571-1653)—founder of one of the most influential, if conservative, schools of *haikai* in the Tokugawa Period—though not of the higher echelons of the aristocracy, was able to study with some of the leading scholars of his day. To the horror of his teachers who lived to witness it, Teitoku not only spread his recently received knowledge of certain classical texts in public lectures,³¹⁵ but also permitted his disciples to publish an important anthology of *haikai* verse, with a number of poems by Teitoku himself, making him a leader in the *haikai* world.³¹⁶ Such publications, relying on the recent employment of woodblock print technology as a commercial medium, were of far more influence than even the most public of lectures in spreading knowledge of classical literature and poetic practices, as they were not limited in the same way in time or space, but could be passed around, reread and reprinted in numbers. The exclusive monopoly of courtly literature by aristocratic families, which had relied on a manuscript culture for its limited, highly controlled propagation of texts, was thus broken up, and, through the gradual, centuries-long process of explicating the past, in studies later characterized as *kokugaku* (国学・“native learning”), “courtly” was transformed into “classical,” the spiritual possession of all.³¹⁷

³¹⁵ His lectures on *Hyakunin Isshū* and *Tsurezuregusa* were delivered in 1603, largely at the insistence of Hayashi Razan (1583-1657), to Razan’s circle of Confucian scholars. Until this time, these two texts, though of vital importance in later Tokugawa popular culture, and particularly *surimono*, were not well known. See Keene, *Landscapes and Portraits* (Tokyo and Palo Alto: Kodansha International, 1971), 79-80.

³¹⁶ The collection was the 1633 *Enokoshū* (犬の子・“The Puppy Collection”), the title of which posited its connection with the sixteenth century collection of iconoclastic *renga*, *Inu Tsukubashū* (犬筑波集・“The Dog Tsuba Collection”—itself a play on the first major *renga* collection, the 1356 筑波集 *Tsubashū*). *Inu Tsukubashū* was woodblock printed in 1615. As its very name suggests, the “Puppy” collection lacked much of the bark and bite of the parodic “dog” version, but was also more morally and socially acceptable than the latter’s sexual and scatological fascinations.

³¹⁷ See, for example, Thomas Harper’s “*The Tale of Genji* in the Eighteenth Century: Keichū, Mabuchi and Norinaga” in Andrew Gerstle (ed.), *Eighteenth Century Japan: Culture and Society* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1989), 106-123.

As an extension of *renga*, appropriating courtly traditions not only for the composition but the inscription of poetry, *haikai* initially simply carried on the methods of recording and presenting the results of *hyakuin* sessions on *kaishi*, without any significant change in conventions. By the late seventeenth century however, the hundred verse sequence was found too long and weighty for *haikai*,³¹⁸ and a thirty-six verse sequence (歌仙・*kasen*) took its place as the standard. As a result, the recording sheets for *haikai no renga* were reduced to two, though they retained the traditional folded format, with six verses on the first and last planes (the front of the *sho no ori* and the back of the *nagori*), and twelve each on the opposite sides of these sheets, corresponding once more with the tempos and thematic requirements of linked verse.³¹⁹ The folded format of presentation *renga* sheets, moreover, to link back once again to the theme of letter writing, also influenced the layout of formal notices and correspondence, which from at least the beginning of the Tokugawa Period began to utilize large sheets of similarly oriented *ori-gami*.³²⁰ Alongside four or two page poetic presentation sheets of linked verse, therefore, the use of a single, unbound sheet for letters, or for half-*kasen* of eighteen linked verses, became standard. The transition from such single sheet presentations to the first (large format) surimono at the turn of the eighteenth century thus involves only developments in medium and content, the introduction of woodblock printing in place of handwriting, and the replacement of official notices or half-*kasen* with the groups of individual *hokku* or short sets of linked verses found on early surimono—aspects that require their own detailed explanations and will be treated shortly. But the source of the complex format of early

³¹⁸ According to Haruo Shirane, a 100-verse sequence required approximately ten hours to complete. A 36-verse *kasen*, by contrast, could be completed in a little over three hours. The transition to the 36-verse sequence was initiated by Bashō from approximately 1678.

³¹⁹ An example can be found in Okada Rihei, Ed., *Onitsura zenshu* (Kadokawa Shoten, 1978), plate 15.

³²⁰ The use of this formal format for announcements gave its paper the name *hōshogami*, or “proclamation paper.” Examples of official notices can be found in *Genkidō shoten kosho mokuroku* (2002-2004), catalogues 12 (nos. 9, 53, 76, 79, 82), 13 (no. 47) and 14 (nos. 37, 49, 92 and 96).

surimono, consisting of large, rectangular sheets folded across their center horizontally, with texts (and/or images) on either side flowing from the open upper edge to the fold at bottom, is clearly in the type of *kaishi* developed for *renga*.

Surimono, in short, derived their early format, which dominated this genre for most of the eighteenth century, and continued to be used even into the twentieth, from *kaishi* for *renga* and *haikai no renga*, influenced also by the related use of this folded format in formal single sheet letters. Early (pre-1735) surimono retain the exact size, paper orientation and quality, folds, decorative effects,³²¹ and to a limited extent (in the *hashi-tsukuri* and the orientation of text to the fold) textual layout of this form. These large, folded surimono do differ from *renga kaishi*, however, in the number of verses presented on a sheet, which was not set and varies extremely among examples, the manner of recording verses, in one column rather than the two of classic *renga*, and in general the size and characteristics of the calligraphy, smaller and generally less expressive/more decorative on most surimono. But the influence of the *kaishi* format on early surimono is striking, and these poetic presentation sheets are clearly the source of this genre's initial approach to paper usage and textual layout. In fact, as evidence that the nature of the surimono as a *kaishi* was apparent in the eighteenth century, the third volume of *Kingen daifukuchō* (禁現大福帳・“A Register of Forbidden Good Fortunes Presently Appearing”), a 1755 *sharebon*, actually refers to surimono as “*kaishi surimono*,” stating that one should not hesitate to express one's joy on receiving them.³²²

It remains to note, in reference to later expansions in the formats of surimono, that *renga*-style *kaishi* were not the only type of *kaishi*, or of poetic presentation sheets

³²¹ It is these, in particular, along with the use of poetry, that suggest surimono were intended as woodblock printed *kaishi*, rather than simply woodblock printed notices. Letters on similar *ori-gami* did not employ such effects, nor did they emphasize poetry. Nevertheless, the formal letter must be seen as part of the background influencing the semiotic reception of these works.

³²² 懐紙摺もの、赤本の類其外見らしき品得たるときは悦ぶ体をあらはすべき事。

in general, used for *haikai* poetry. The precedents and particular uses of these other formats will bear an important relation to surimono as the genre develops and expands in the nineteenth century. First, just as there were half, quarter and sixth sheet *kaishi* in use for *waka* poetry, so did *haikai* poets employ smaller formats for the inscription or presentation of single *hokku*. For *haikai* poets, these smaller, unfolded *kaishi* provided an opportunity for individual expression lacking in the *kasen* presentation sheet; they were inscribed in the poet's own calligraphy, rather than that of a scribe, and frequently included a small brush drawing related to the poem, generally from the poet's own hand.³²³ Such single-verse *kaishi* can thus be said to constitute one component of so-called *haiga*, or *haikai* pictures, though as a genre *haiga* extends over many painting formats. These picture-poem combinations will also be of some influence on surimono, most directly for those of Buson and his pupils. As most *haikai* poets were not independently wealthy, these individual poem *kaishi*, and other formats of material inscription, particularly *tanzaku*, were often sold, rather than presented as gifts, the best being valued as much for their fine calligraphy as for the content of their poems.³²⁴ Perhaps in part because the use of *tanzaku* was naturalized and commercialized in this way, and certainly for the physical limitations of the format, suitable for the inscription of a single *ku*, but neither a group nor most kinds of illustration, *tanzaku* played only a limited role in surimono practice.³²⁵ Of far greater

³²³ Another possibility emerged with the practice of *haigasan*, literally “*haikai* picture praise,” in which a poet would add a verse to another's painting, or a painter a drawing to another's verse, resulting in a kind of dialogue resembling that of linked verse itself—see Shirane (1998), 176. In most cases, surimono also involved the input of “two hands,” and I will argue in the second half of this dissertation that the relation between poetry and image in surimono borrowed much from the methods of linking and associative dialogue found in *haikai no renga*, as well as from the established poetic associations (*engo*, *honkadori* and the like) of *waka*.

³²⁴ Shirane (1998), 176. Surimono, remained, however, whatever their costs to the poets who commissioned them, a presentation print. Evidence of the cost of surimono to the makers survive in various sources, including letters, advertisements and poets' records. For more on this, see Katō Sadahiko “Haikai surimono jijō—Bunseiki Kamigata wo chūshin ni” in *Edo Bungaku* 16 (1996), 64-82.

³²⁵ A few nineteenth century *haikai* surimono were modeled after *tanzaku*, but these were limited and not very important exceptions. In the development of *kyōka* surimono, however, the tall, vertical *jūnigiriban* could be said to resemble the *tanzaku* in proportions, though not exact dimensions.

consequence for surimono was a third form used in the inscription of poetry, the *shikishi*.

Shikishi (色紙 • literally “colored paper”), like *kaishi*, seems to have begun as a thinner kind of paper with numerous uses, though none as pedestrian as “pocket paper,” but it too took on a thicker version that was utilized for the inscription of poetry and other texts. As simply dyed paper of many shades, *shikishi* have a fairly ancient history, being mentioned in both the collection of the Shōsōin 正倉院 (established 756) storehouse in Nara and the festival practices of *Engi shiki* (延喜式 • Ceremonies of the Engi Period [901-923]).³²⁶ Though often called “square,” the standard *shikishi* was actually slightly taller than it was wide, various in size, but typically 28 x 25 cm in its larger version, 22 x 19 in its smaller. As such, it offered a less grand, less formal, and therefore more easily approachable surface than *kaishi* for the inscription of poetry. Consequently, the rules for the inscription of *shikishi*, and the uses to which it was put, generally show more flexibility than *kaishi*. *Shikishi* were used not only for gifts of presentation poetry, but also for private notes and poetic letters, as a pictorial space for paintings, and as interior decoration, pasted to screens and sliding doors.³²⁷ In this latter context, text and image frequently coincided, with poetry inspired by the paintings on screens written on *shikishi*, which was then pasted onto the screen itself (屏風歌 • *byōbu-uta*). But *shikishi* with poetry alone could certainly also be used for interior design, as in the famous example of Fujiwara Teika’s Ogura villa, decorated with poems from his compilation *Hyakunin isshu* on *shikishi*. Such usage plainly shows that *shikishi* were less formal sites for poetry inscription than *kaishi*, and associated more closely with pictorial art and

³²⁶ See the *shikishi* entry in *Nihon koten bungaku daijiten*. Also *Engi-shiki, Procedures of the Engi Era*. Translated with Introduction and Notes by Felicia Bock (Tōkyō: Sophia University, 1970), 163.

³²⁷ *Genji monogatari*, for example, makes multiple references to *shikishi* in varying contexts. *Shikishi* is colored paper for a love letter in the *Otome* 乙女 section (377) on the one hand, and one of the formats for the presentation of pictures in “E-awase” (312) on the other.

interior decoration than was this latter form. Therefore, while surimono modeled after *kaishi* asserted something of the solemn, presentational aspect of the work, bringing poetry and calligraphy to the fore, those based on *shikishi* tended to emphasize the decorative beauty of the surface, and image as much as text.

The historical connotations of *kaishi* and *shikishi* for surimono commissioners were also based on the way these formats were used in the Tokugawa Era. Whereas the folded *kaishi* format was to some degree normalized as a standard part of contemporary *haikai no renga* practice³²⁸ and formal communications between samurai, *shikishi* retained an aura of aristocratic elegance, particularly in reference to the painters of the court-based Tosa School, for whom *shikishi* was the favored format. Sets of literary themes from the *Ise* and *Genji monogatari* and other courtly works, drawn and colored in the late Yamato-e style on *shikishi*, emphasized the intimate connection of this form with an idealized, classical past. Moreover, whereas the formats of *kaishi* for *waka* and *haikai no renga* had diverged, emphasizing a division between classical and modern, aristocrats and usurpers, the layout of *shikishi* remained largely the same for all kinds of poetry inscribed upon it, nor had it changed much over time. Therefore, by nature of its context, *shikishi* was not only the brighter and more decorative form, but also, despite some loss in formality in comparison to *kaishi*, the one with deeper connections to an image of courtly culture. These facts will be important to bear in mind in tracing the transition of the standard surimono format from one based on renga *kaishi* to another based on *shikishi* in the early nineteenth century, helping to explain why *shikishi* was selected as the most suitable form for the poetry that appeared on surimono at this later time.

³²⁸ Bashō, for instance, emphasizing *haikai renga* as a performance art, the meaning of which was in the moment of production, once stated that the *kaishi* was no more than garbage once taken down from the recording stand. See *Sanzōshi* (“Three Booklets”) in *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* v.51: *Renga ronshū Haikai ronshū* (Shōgakkan, 1971), 549.

In summation, the formats that surimono took in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were not new innovations or arbitrary choices, but based on a particular understanding of the material practices of poets and the connotations of the traditions they had established for the inscription and presentation of poetry over nearly a millennium of activity. What this fact implies, first and foremost, is that the commissioners of surimono viewed their genre, or at the very least tried to place it, within the context of poetic tradition. And this was so not only at the origins of surimono, but also throughout its more than two hundred year history. Though illustrations were to play a gradually increasing role in the development of surimono, and have even been viewed at times as the *raison d'être* of the genre, these close links with the material forms of classical poetry reveal that the roots of surimono lie firmly in the ground of literary practice, and take inspiration, sustenance and direction from it. Further evidence for this statement, already to some extent shown in the physical formats of surimono poetry sheets, will be found in an examination of the particular poetic activities of surimono's commissioners—based on traditional practices of poetry and ritual related to the New Year festival—that gave birth to the genre.

B. In the Context of Poetry, Part 2: The Content, Forms and Practices of New Year Verse

***Hatsuharu*: The Development of a New Year Aesthetic at the Heian Court**

Examination of the material practices of poetry inscription reveals the background and development of the grand, folded form that surimono took at its inception, and later, after its inclusion of *kyōka*, the format it ultimately found most appropriate for the needs of this poetic genre. It does not, however, explain the particular *content* of these pieces, which from its inception differs markedly from *renga kaishi*, nor does it explicate precisely, other than as a poetic presentation, the incentive and motivations that led poets to commission surimono. It should be

remembered that, first of all, *haikai* surimono were not, as a rule, records of *kasen*, but rather, collections of thematically linked *hokku*, and in older examples, short, three *ku* sets of linked verses. The thematic unity was in almost all cases seasonal, and for early surimono, the season of importance was the New Year, with *saitan* (“dawn of the year”) surimono dominating the genre to such an extent that it is tempting to call surimono “New Year poetry presentation prints.” But why was the New Year the season for poetry presentation? And why did these New Year presentations take the literary structure they did, rather than, for example, a *haikai no renga* sequence with “saitan” as *fushimono*? Although the New Year rituals of *renga* and *haikai* poets will be of most immediate influence in answering these questions, because their practices grew out of court poetry and its traditions, it will also serve to look back again to the Heian Period, when so many of the standards for poetry and its subsequent uses were established.

First, although the absolutely central importance of the New Year among festivals in early (and modern) Japan may seem obvious to anyone involved in Japanese studies, it is worthwhile reviewing and historically contextualizing this holiday. It may come as a surprise, for example, that the *Engi-shiki*, the work detailing festivals and ceremonies of the Engi Era (901-923) makes no mention of the New Year³²⁹ whatsoever in its first part, “Festivals of the Seasons,” the only references to this holiday being found in relation to the shrine of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu at Ise. In Book Four, “Shrine of the Great Deity,” we learn that:

every time on the first day of the year, the *negi* [shrine priests],
uchindo [a group responsible for controlling the weather with
prayer to the deities of sun and wind] and so on, worship at each

³²⁹ There were many words used to describe the New Year in early Japan. For New Year’s Day itself, *gantān*, the “first dawn” is most common, though references are also made to *saitan*, “dawn of the year.” *Shōgatsu*, “the proper month,” signifies the New Year Festival as a whole. *Mutsuki*, “the sprouting month,” is also used, but implies the first month in general, not just the New Year holidays. *Mutsuki no sekku*, however, means “festival of the first month,” and thus New Year’s.

of the shrines, making presentations of *sake* steeped with herbs.... That done, they make obeisance to the Sovereign's Court. After this a feast is bestowed. On the third day at dawn they respectfully offer congratulations to the Consecrated Princess [*itsuki-no-miko*, the Ise vestal virgin].³³⁰

In the rules for the “Bureau of the Consecrated Imperial Princess” (*Itsukinomiya no tsukasa*, Book Five), moreover, we learn that it is the duty of the Princess, as representative of the Imperial House, to “make distant obeisance to the Shrine of the Great Deity” every New Year's Day, as well as to prepare the ingredients of *toso* (屠蘇) spices for medicinal sake imbibed at the New Year feast.³³¹ Referred to in this lengthy list of requirements for the Princess' Bureau merely as “three occasions of the first month,” the New Year festivities seem to have consisted of three feasts, on the first, seventh and sixteenth days, the seventh being the day for the conferral of new ranks, among other rituals, and the sixteenth the first meal after the end of the New Year festival, which closed with the full moon on the night of the fifteenth.³³² The lack of importance given to the New Year in the *Engi shiki* is startling, and perhaps suggests a turning away from rites and practices borrowed from the T'ang court, such as the seventh day Festival of Young Herbs, which *is* listed as one of seven major annual festivals in the *shiki* rules appended to the code of *ritsu-ryō* law in 718, though not in the *Engi-shiki*. How accurate a reflection of actual court life these official documents are remains uncertain, but it is clear that the complex sets of practices and lore now associated with the New Year were developed over centuries, through the influence of local, folk celebrations grafted onto the model of imported Chinese rituals. It bears note in this context that the connection of Amaterasu with the New Year, in contrast with borrowed T'ang practices, functioned from early on as part of

³³⁰ *Engi-shiki, Procedures of the Engi Era*. Translated with Introduction and Notes by Felicia Bock (Tōkyō: Sophia University, 1970), 125.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 180, 178.

³³² These feast days are not specified in the *Engi shiki*, but are mentioned in the *zōryō* (miscellaneous laws). See Bock, n.533, 163.

the founding mythology of the Imperial Court, later inscribed in the *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki*. It is her emergence from self-seclusion in a cave that symbolically marks the rebirth of spring.³³³

Despite the paucity of references to the New Year in official records, however, literary writings from the centuries around the *Engi shiki* suggest that this festival, and especially the renewal of spring it signified, were of growing importance to the cultural life of the court. Poems 819-850 of the *Manyōshū* 万葉集 (first drafted c.760), for example, are the products of a spring plum-blossom party held by Ōtomo no Tabito 大伴旅人(683-731) on 1/13/730, and these T'ang-influenced verses combine many of the themes later used in celebratory New Year poetry, including, in addition to the main theme of plum, the warbler, bamboo, green willows, groves, late snow, wine-drinking and pleasure. The opening poem of the sequence welcomes the arrival of the New Year (*mutsuki tachi*) and spring, suggesting that it is a time simply to relax and enjoy oneself.

<i>Mutsuki tachi</i>	The first month begins
<i>Haru no kitaraba</i>	And spring has arrived
<i>Kaku shi koso</i>	Let each just like this
<i>Ume wo okitsutsu</i>	In the way of the plum
<i>Tanoshiki oeme</i>	Pass this day in pleasure

Time (as well as timelessness), suggested by the cycle of the seasons that the New Year represents, is the subject of poem 834, a theme to which New Year poetry itself will cyclically return:

³³³ New Year being the first day of spring in the lunar-based calendar that spread across the ancient Middle East, to China by trade routes, and then to Japan. Traditional New Year's Day falls somewhere between January 21 and February 20 in the contemporary solar calendar. This New Year was mythically aligned with the Amaterasu cycle, and watching the sun emerge at the New Year one of the special ritual acts one could perform to experience the holiness of this rebirth. Rising suns, the suns' personified rays and scenes reminiscent of the emergence of Amaterasu (dancers, mirrors, laughter, music, strong men and beautiful women) are thus extremely common in surimono texts and images.

<i>Yorozuyo ni</i>	As for a myriad ages
<i>Toshi wa kiu to mo</i>	The years are said to come
<i>Ume no hana</i>	This flower of the plum
<i>Tayuru koto naku</i>	Will never cease,
<i>Sakiwatarubeshi</i>	Blossoming on and on

A New Year activity, pine-pulling on the first day of the rat is also the subject of poem 4517, composed for a gathering at the palace, at which the participants were given jeweled brooms:

<i>Hatsuharu no</i>	For the first of spring's
<i>Hatsune no kyō no</i>	First Day of the Rat
<i>Tamabahaki</i>	The jeweled broom
<i>Te ni toru kara ni</i>	I take in hand, and
<i>Yuraku tama no o</i>	The threads of jewels tinkle

Many other *Manyōshū* poems reinforce and expand the imagery associated with spring at Tabito's plum party, most notably, dispatching quickly with the plethora of poems on the plum and warbler alone (1185-86, 1423, 1486, 1819, 1873, among others), 1057 (rising sun), 1437, 1439, 1450, 1812 and 4314 (mist, a theme not borrowed from T'ang verse), 3991 (spring rain), and 4316 (light, calmness). A verse on the last theme, which will be reflected prominently in *kyōka* surimono of the nineteenth century, opens:

<i>Uraura ni</i>	In the endless calm
<i>Tereru haru hi ni</i>	Of this glittering spring day ³³⁴

The bright peacefulness of the spring day, like the themes of pleasure and timelessness, and the category of natural items and phenomena connected with this season, will later be taken as determining forces for the poetry of New Year *kyōka* surimono and its imagery, and so bear holding in mind.

Seasonal references, which began to develop in the *Manyōshū*, were transformed into a fairly strict conventional code with the compilation of the *Kokin*

³³⁴ *Haru no hi*, significantly, was also a metaphor for the Crown Prince, called the "Spring Palace Dweller."

wakashū (compiled c.914), the very structure of which was partly based on the seasons. Spring, significantly, comprises the opening two books of the *Kokinshū*, the first of which in particular add several important motifs to the catalogue already listed for the *Manyōshū*: breezes, pines, young herbs (*wakana*), geese, mountains and valleys, dawn, fragrance, choruses of birds. An example of the kind of poetry that would be most influential for *kyōka* surimono is this verse by Ki no Tomonori 紀友則 (?-907), one of a sequence of *Kokinshū* ‘spring’ poems written, notably, for a poetry contest during the reign of Emperor Uda 宇陀天皇 (867-931, r.888-897), and sponsored by the Empress:

<i>Hana no ka wo</i>	To a message of breeze
<i>Kaze no tayori ni</i>	Tie the fragrance of
<i>Taguete zo</i>	Blossoming plum
<i>Uguisu sasou</i>	As a signal to summon
<i>Shirube ni wa yaru</i>	The warbler

A great many of the other spring poems in the *Kokinshū* (and *Manyōshū*), however, contrasting the bright mood of the season with personal sadness or laments for increasing age—another reference to passing time in relation to the New Year³³⁵—were less suitable for the celebratory poetry of surimono, and had an influence only for their approaches to language, poetics and seasonal imagery. Nevertheless, the codification of seasonal language (季語 • *kigo*) in the *Kokinshū* was of inestimable influence on the direction of poetry composition for the next millennium, shaping not only the content of poems on surimono, but also the seasonal consciousness that gave rise to the form and helped it to develop.

Although few *Kokinshū* poems directly reference the New Year itself—an important exception being the very first poem in the anthology, later the object of

³³⁵ As one’s age was counted according to the number of year cycles one had been a part of, New Year’s Day meant that everyone became a year older. A child born on the last day of the twelfth month would thus become two within a matter of hours.

Masaoka Shiki's ridicule as representative of everything he despised about *Kokinshū* poetics—the connection of the coming of spring with the New Year holiday lent this festival its particular poetic flavor. This 'New Year aura' can be felt most distinctly in the *Makura no sōshi* (枕草紙) of Sei Shonagon (born c.966), which like the *Kokinshū* begins with the four seasons, but then focuses in on New Year's festivities in particular. The work begins:

In spring it is the dawn [that is most characteristically beautiful].
Bit by bit the edges of the mountains whiten, then redden slightly,
while strands of thin purple clouds are drawn over them.³³⁶

This description of an early spring morning, with its sense of silence and awe, is related to the New Year practice of *hatsu hinode*, or watching the first sunrise of the year, thereby aligning the opening of the narrative not only with the start of a new day, but also the fresh start of the New Year.³³⁷ The first detailed section, moving from discussion of the general year cycle to specific events, begins:

On the first day of the first month, the sky is refreshingly soft and calm with deepening mists. People in the world below trouble themselves over their figures, decorating them with care. What a rare delight it is to watch them present congratulations to the emperor and celebrate their own new year.³³⁸

The return to mist reconnects this passage with the opening lines, but from there, Sei shifts from the natural to the human movements of the New Year, including reference to a ritual New Year greeting, a practice to be examined shortly. She goes on to discuss in great detail in this lengthy section the events of the extended New Year

³³⁶ *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, v. 11: *Makura no sōshi*, 63. Sei utilizes several of the conventional seasonal images of spring from *waka* poetry, but her language is so visual that it reflects, or has been transformed with uncanny faithfulness, to paintings, and even prints by later artists, who utilized colored bands of purple mist and pale red on the outlines of hills to suggest spring sunrise.

³³⁷ It is noteworthy that many narrative diaries align their openings with the beginning of the new season cycle, and the start of time that New Year represents. In addition to *Makura no sōshi*, *Kagerō Nikki*, *Towazugatari* and *Oku no hosomichi* pointedly start at the New Year; *Tosa Nikki* begins at the year end.

³³⁸ *Ibid*, 64

holiday, including the Festival of Young Herbs³³⁹ and the Presentation of Horses on the seventh, the giving of thanks for new ranks on the eighth, and the preparation of “full moon gruel” on the fifteenth, the end of the New Year holidays.³⁴⁰ *Makura no sōshi* gives us perhaps the best account of the spirit of New Year festivities in the literature of this time, weaving conventional spring images of *waka* with a view of human activities both insightful and mirthful. We can sense in her narrative, as we cannot in *Engi shiki*, the importance of the New Year at the Imperial Court, and how the various rituals and practices of this season played out in individual human lives.

Another valuable source for viewing attitudes towards New Year’s at this time, which like *Makura no sōshi* both built on and helped to establish precedents for the literary treatment of its festivals, is *Genji Monogatari*. Several New Year’s Days are described in this work, providing various angles, but also a great degree of similitude, on the event. In the *Usugumo* (薄雲・“Wisps of Cloud”) section, for example, we are told, in language reminiscent of Sei’s:

New Year came. Under soft, calm skies, Genji’s house was free of concern, a circumstance worthy of celebration. Among those who visited his polished splendor came a parade of elder callers on the seventh day, expressing gratitude, while a host of younger visitors came simply out of joy. Person after person hid their private worries, showing happy faces for this time of year.³⁴¹

The idyllic nature of the season is also stressed in the chapter that focuses on New Year’s Day in greatest detail, *Hatsune* (初音・“The First Song [of the Warbler]”):

³³⁹ Introduced to the Heian court by the T’ang, this was one of seven official festivals listed in the *shiki* addendum to the *Ritsuryō* code in 718. The Festival of the Young Herbs involved picking seven kinds of plants, typically on an excursion to the countryside. These usually include *Seri* (dropwort), *Nazuna* (shepherd’s purse), *Gogyō* (cotton weed), *Hakobera* (chickweed), *Hotokenoza* (cotton sow thistle), *Suzuna* (turnip), and *Suzushiro* (Japanese white radish), although there are some regional variations. These seven herbs were ritually cut—chopped 28 times on the night of the seventh, 21 times on the morning of the eighth, and cooked with rice gruel, a concoction that was said to improve health and extend longevity. At court, this gruel was ritually offered to the emperor, but the practice was widespread and took place in individual households as well.

³⁴⁰ *Mochi-gayu no seku* (望粥の節)

³⁴¹ *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, v.13: *Genji monogatari* (2) (Shogakkan, 1989), 427

The sky on New Year's morning was cloudless and calm.
Within even the humblest of hedges, fresh greens now began
to appear amid patches of snow, mists rising as these melted,
and as buds appeared on the trees and people's hearts too
seemed naturally to swell with gladness. The gardens of Genji's
mansions were strewn with jeweled delights, and the exquisite
beauty of the setting and the ladies was beyond words.³⁴²

Some reality intrudes into these idealized scenes with the Suzaku Emperor's illness at the New Year in *Wakana, jō* (若菜上・“Young Herbs, I”), though the title's seventh day herbs seem to live up to their power, prolonging his life for several chapters to come. But bleakness falls on Genji in the *Maboroshi* (幻) section, where New Year fails to bring its promise of renewal after the death of Murasaki. Significantly, his condition is phrased in terms of light and darkness that recall the Amaterasu myth:

Even seeing the light of spring only plunged Genji into
further, bewildering darkness, and he felt there would be
no relief from the sadness gripping his heart. Outside,
people gathered as usual to wish him well, but Genji
claimed illness and remained behind his blinds.³⁴³

By the chapter's end, New Year has come again, and once more the contrast of this idyllic time with Genji's unchanging, despondent condition highlights the depth of his sorrow. His final poem, commenting on the meaninglessness of the passage of time for him now, hints that he, like the old year, incapable of renewal, must pass on. This type of temporal awareness and self-evaluation at the New Year, in which one's own personal state is contrasted with the larger movements of time and the seasons, can be seen in the poetic tropes of sadness in a season of joy and consciousness of one's advancing age in the rebirth of spring, both familiar themes in *waka*.³⁴⁴

³⁴² *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, v.14: *Genji monogatari* (3) (Shogakkan, 1989), 137

³⁴³ *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, v.15: *Genji monogatari* (4) (Shogakkan, 1989), 507

³⁴⁴ On the theme of age in springtime, see *Kokinshū* 8, 28, 57, 747. For spring sadness, *Manyōshū* 4316. For a sense of loss, Princess Shikushi's celebrated *Shinkokinshū* verse.

It is important at this point, however, and convenient in relation to the Tale of Genji, having now established some of the associations of the New Year season in poetic and other practices of the Heian Court, to distinguish between different uses of *waka*, and different types of *waka* for particular uses, a topic touched on already in the discussion of presentation sheets. Although “the sadness of spring” may be a poignant poetic theme with deep resonance in poetic anthologies, like Genji’s callers in the *Usugumo* passage above, it had no place in the kind of celebratory, wishful and auspicious poetry typically exchanged at the New Year. With “congratulatory poems” (*ga no uta*), we pass over aesthetics as the primary concern of poetry to concentrate on its social uses—binding people in relationships and expressing mutual good will—and also the magical functions of *kotodama*—to shape, control or influence reality, especially, for reasons to be explored, in the New Year season. In the *Wakana* chapter, for example, Tamakazura meets Genji at the New Year, and offers him a standard poem of felicitation, expressing respect for him with a hope for his longevity:

<i>Wakaba sasu</i>	Today, from the fields
<i>Nobe no komatsu wo</i>	Where new herbs grow
<i>Hiki-tsurete</i>	I have brought these seedling pines
<i>Moto no iwane wo</i>	Back to their original rock-root
<i>Inoru kefu kana</i>	Praying that it may never change ³⁴⁵

Genji, after partaking of the seven-herb porridge she has brought, responds in kind:

<i>Komatsubara</i>	May the seedling pines
<i>Sue no yowai ni</i>	To the end of their lives
<i>Hikarete ya</i>	Shine bright
<i>Nobe no wakana mo</i>	Piling up years like the herbs
<i>Toshi wo tsumubeshi</i>	Plucked from the fields ³⁴⁶

³⁴⁵ The verse puns on *hiki-tsurete* (“bring [someone, here her children] along”) with its embedded *hiki*, referencing the First Rat Day practice of pulling (*hiki*) pine shoots, symbols of longevity. Tamakazura wishes Genji longevity, while including a wish that he assist her children. Ibid, 51

³⁴⁶ Ibid. Genji also puns on *hiku*, in its passive form *hikarete* (be pulled) in which it sound like *hikaru* (shine), while also playing with *tsumu* (pile up/pluck).

Such poems could scarcely themselves be called ‘immortal,’ but contrary to the wishes expressed in them, had no aim to be long lasting themselves. Rather, like New Year decorations—displayed fifteen days, then given to the river or burned—they fulfilled a momentary, seasonal purpose, starting the New Year felicitously, and re-establishing important bonds and obligations. The requirements of such poetry were to create an atmosphere of bright, auspicious warmth, using materials at hand (typically the images of the New Year season) to refer to an expressed desire for the recipient’s welfare.

In a similarly auspicious manner, the *Hatsune* chapter itself, on the theme of New Year’s Day, follows Genji through an absolutely ideal holiday as he receives callers bearing gifts and congratulatory poems, and visits his various ladies, exchanging seasonally appropriate verses with them. No hint of darkness or worry shadows these poems, which partake of the idealized mood of hopeful joy associated with the New Year in *Genji*’s early chapters. In their more formal version, as in Genji’s exchange with Tamakazura above, these congratulatory poetic greetings invariably utilized symbols of longevity associated with the New Year season. When Genji comes upon Murasaki’s women charmingly enjoying a holiday repast of “mirror cakes” (鏡餅 • *kagami mochi*), hard confections of pounded rice used as New Year decoration and suitable for the rite of New Year “teeth strengthening” (歯固め)³⁴⁷ he playfully promises to fulfill any wishes they may have for the coming year. Chūjo, making reference to a *Kokinshū* poem sung during the *ha-gatame*,³⁴⁸ responds:

Assured by the mirror cake that ten centuries are in
store for your august lordship, how should I think of
anything for myself?³⁴⁹

³⁴⁷ A selection of special foods, some of them hard-textured, were gnawed on at the New Year, in a practice thought to bring prolonged health. The connection of strong teeth with virility seems to be universal.

³⁴⁸ Poem no.1086: “Looking to the Mirror Mountains of Omi, we see ten centuries for this august reign”

³⁴⁹ I have borrowed Seidensticker’s elegant translation for this passage, which subtly references the content of the *Kokinshū* verse. *The Tale of Genji* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1989), 410.

After meeting groups of well-wishers with their New Year greetings, Genji settles down with Murasaki, suggesting that they exchange congratulatory poems of their own. His plays on the ice-like cracking of the surface of the *kagami mochi*, a spring trope, in a seasonably suitable image of idealization and contentment:

<i>Usugōri</i>	Its thin ice melted
<i>Tokenuru ike no</i>	In the mirror
<i>Kagami ni wa</i>	Of this lake's surface
<i>Yo ni tagui naki</i>	Are aligned two forms
<i>Kage zo naraberu</i>	Without worldly precedent

Hers picks up on his play with the punning concept of “mirror” (*kagami*) and the round, lake-like shape of the cake, while adding the felicitous note of longevity:

<i>Kumori naki</i>	In the mirror
<i>Ike no kagami ni</i>	Of this unclouded lake
<i>Yorozuyo wo</i>	I can see, plain as can be
<i>Sumubeki kage zo</i>	These forms, destined
<i>Shiruku miekeru</i>	To live ten thousand years

Though these celebratory New Year poems may seem to lie at the opposite extreme from the trope of “spring sadness,” employing only positive images and symbols of good fortune, there is nevertheless a deep connection uniting them—the awareness of passing time. But whereas the poem of spring sadness indulges in the contrast of age, frustration and loss with the rebirth of nature, the poem of felicitation attempts to overcome the sense of passing time and mortality by asserting its contrary—stasis, and the wish for extravagantly elongated life. This underlying connection explains in part why poems of felicitation are typically New Year poems. But the reason the New Year should be a season for the expression of wishes, greetings and prayers for the impossible requires further examination.

***Ga no uta* and *Kissho*: Congratulatory Poems and Auspicious Notices**

Genji Monogatari offers us a rare view into the exchange of congratulatory poems among aristocratic individuals at the New Year, poetry that has only seldom survived in anthologies or individual poetry collections, being occasional pieces directed at a particular audience, and not for general reading. It is a variant of such felicitous poetry that we will find on later New Year's *kyōka* surimono, so it will be valuable to examine the particular customs and practices of "congratulatory literature," particularly as it relates to the New Year. Fortunately, a selection of these poems of praise and good wishes, being directed at the Imperial House or its major shrines,³⁵⁰ were anthologized, most notably in Book Seven of the *Kokinshū*, "Felicitations" (賀歌). Not coincidentally, many of these are related to the New Year, for reasons to be explored. One of the earliest of such is poem 105 from the *Nihonshoki*, in which the head of the Soga clan, at a New Year's banquet, "offers up the cup of long life" and sings the praises of "*wa ga ōkimi*" ("my great lord") who "rules the realm in peace," praying three times in repetition "for myriad ages, may it be just as it is now."³⁵¹ *Kokinshū* 357 repeats almost exactly the same desire for stasis in the style of the later age, again in relation to the New Year:

<i>Kasugano ni</i>	In the Kasuga fields
<i>Wakana tsumitsutsu</i>	I grasp young herbs
<i>Yorozuyo wo</i>	Oh, let it be for myriad ages—
<i>Iwau kokoro wa</i>	This celebratory feeling in my heart
<i>Kami zo shiruramu</i>	The Gods must surely know

In this section of the *Kokinshū* (343-364), we can see more broadly than in *Genji* the language used for such *ga no uta*, wishing long life. These include, of course, the pat phrases "thousand generations," "eight thousand generations" and "ten thousand

³⁵⁰ An example of this latter kind, which I will not have space to cover here, is Fujiwara Shunzei's poem to the God of the Hie shrine in Shiga, *Shinkokinshū* I:16, which mentions the ancient pines of the area and imagines the New Year custom of pine shoot pulling in a past age.

³⁵¹ McCullough (1985), 76, Cranston (1993) 112.

generations,” but also tortoises and cranes, pines, moss, the sun, and any small object that could be counted in endless numbers—petals, sand, droplets of water. All of the 22 poems in Book Seven were likely composed around the time of the New Year, for all of those with explanatory headnotes (18) identify them as celebrations for members of the imperial family who had achieved ages of 40, 50, 60 and so on.³⁵²

The fact that New Year’s Day was a “birthday” of sorts for all people, the time when every person added one to his or her age, regardless of the month of year born, was part of the reason for the sending of congratulatory greetings and poems at this time of year. In this sense, *surimono*, which have at times been erroneously called “New Year’s cards” in the West, could just as easily have been labeled “birthday cards,” as these occasions overlapped. But there is something more to these celebratory poems than just bland, formulaic birthday wishes. First, it must be said that behind these prayers for long life are quite nakedly thoughts of uncertainty and death. The impossible request that one please live for ten thousand years, though flattering, underlines forcibly the very limits of human lifespan. Once more, the passing of the old year and the beginning of the new brings awareness of age, and the fact that human life, unlike the seasons, is neither cyclical nor eternal. The desire to deny this reality in the poems of felicitation, although superficially kind, is simply not convincing, and their failure seems only to heighten the sense of mortality. But if this were the whole story, the practice of such congratulatory poetry surely would have died out relatively early. Clearly, there is something more to these impossible New Year wishes than their literal meaning carries. To understand this, we must delve beyond the superficial language of the poems themselves, and view them in the

³⁵² Genji himself is the object of such attentions in the *Wakana* section, having reached his fortieth year. The celebration took place on the First Day of the Rat, a festival associated with longevity.

religious context of the New Year season, as well as in the ritual aspect of early Japanese verse.

In addition to bringing sensitivity to the *passage* of time with the changing of the seasons, the New Year itself constituted, in less rational, mythological terms, a *break* in time, creating a chasm between the old, familiar world and a newborn, uncertain one. Regarding this sense of cosmic time, Mircea Eliade writes:

The cosmos is conceived as a living unity that is born, develops and dies on the last day of the year, to be reborn on New Year's Day. We shall see that this *rebirth* is a *birth*, that the cosmos is reborn each year because, at New Year, time begins *ab initio*.³⁵³

Eliade's point is that the life of the cosmos is circular, and this circle is the year itself. When a cycle came to its end, it was not merely the close of one arbitrary sequence that transitioned neatly to the next—the secular view of time—but the complete death of the old world, and the complete recreation of a new one. New Year is thus both a time of uncertainty,³⁵⁴ and of great opportunity.³⁵⁵ For the renewal of the world is also its return to the original moment of creation, when anything at all is possible, even ten thousand year lives.³⁵⁶ Such a wish, then, at the New Year, is not an absurd denial of the facts of reality so much as a desire to reshape them, through fervent words and

³⁵³ *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968), 73

³⁵⁴ It is noteworthy, in this regard, that the Festival of the Dead, now celebrated in July or August, took place on New Year's Eve during the Heian Period, the spirits returning to the afterworld in the morning of the New Year. See, for example, the 27th section of *Makura no sōshi*. This too is part of the New Year preoccupation not only with rebirth, but also with aging and death.

³⁵⁵ "To the people of Japan, the New Year is not simply a date set at the beginning of the calendar; it has a deep, mystic significance. Each New Year brings a new life, a new hope. What is past has no bearing on the future, and wherever may have been calamities of the year gone by, the new one has begun with a clean slate and with the best of prospects. The past indeed has sunk into the abyss of death with each stroke of the 108 bells. The gods permit humanity a fresh start, and if properly propitiated will bestow protection." Quoted from U.A. Cassal, *The Five Sacred Festivals of Ancient Japan* (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1967).

³⁵⁶ Eliade: "The New Year coincides with the first day of Creation" (104). "It implies starting time over again at its beginning, that is, restoration of the primordial time, the 'pure' time, that existed at the moment of Creation" (78). And also: "Religious man reactualizes the cosmogony not only each time he wants to create something...but also when he wants to ensure a fortunate reign for the sovereign..." (81).

prayer, in the “strong time” of the beginning. In this context, we can see that poetic prayers for good fortune were not to be taken literally, or their content seriously considered, but were rather closer to spells or talismans, which sought to move the gods or the ground of being through the power of *kotodama*, the spirit of words. Extremity and exaggeration, in this regard, merely showed the depth of one’s feeling, required to “move heaven and earth, and stir the emotions of spirits and gods.”³⁵⁷ Although poetry could potentially have such power in any season, prayers like these were all the more likely to be successful in the sacred, malleable time of beginnings, before the year had settled back into the profane routine of everyday life. It will pay to keep these facts in mind too when examining the idyllic, utopian aspects of later *surimono*.

It is in the same vein, though less dramatically, that *shōgatsu*, the “proper” month, was the time to establish, through ritual “firsts,” patterns that would guide one successfully through the remainder of the year.³⁵⁸ A bad start, without renewal, as in the *Wakana* and *Maboroshi* chapters of *Genji*, impended disaster. But if one was focused on mindfully and properly performing even the small tasks of daily living at the New Year, then the rest of the year would fall naturally into place. This was the power—and the danger—of the sacred time of beginnings, that it was a re-enactment of the cosmogony, the original creation of the world. Because, spiritually speaking, the world completely died, and was born anew each year, there were possibilities, but also deep anxiety about what the new would bring (as in the fear of death that prompted “long life” felicitations). A complete break, necessary for revitalization, also meant that there were no guarantees the new world would be anything like the old; rather, it was necessary to guide it, as well as to carry over from the old year what

³⁵⁷ This quote on the power of poetry comes from the *Kokinshū*’s *kana* preface.

³⁵⁸ Many personal rituals of the New Year centered around initial activities: the first drawing of water, first dressing, first brush writing, first bath, and first dream of the new year.

had been important, and to make it fresh—in essence, to give birth to it again. The many rites and ritual behaviors of the New Year, repeated at the start of every cycle, were thus a way of “training” the year, of directing it down the proper path, and connecting it to what had come before. New Year’s was also time to reconnect personally, to re-establish ties that had existed in the past and to make sure that they were continued—or transplanted—safely into the New Year. Letters, notes, gifts, and presentation poetry were ways to affirm old connections, and so reassert their existence in a new season. Starting all over again meant just that, though its benefit was that it could be done selectively, avoiding the errors of the previous cycle, and with the slate wiped clean.

Eliade’s theories on cosmological time and the New Year describe as much a psychological truth—the periodic, human need for renewal by completely casting off the accumulated burdens of the past and returning to the blank slate of origins, where re-creation becomes possible—as the spiritual or sacred condition of being, in which time is actually reversible, endlessly repeatable, because the ground of ultimate being is timeless and eternally present. In psychological terms, then, his attempt to deny the bounty of renewal to “modern man,” with a secular view of time, is flawed, for liminal moments in human life—of which Eliade took the New Year as the ultimate example—come in many forms: moving to a new dwelling, taking a new position, traveling, or, in the Japanese context, changing one’s name—a list that will bear holding in mind, as all were occasions for a *surimono*. But the New Year, being a cosmic movement rather than a personal one, offered the greatest opportunity for renewal, and New Year practices enforced, in fact, the ritual abolition of the old, a break with what had come before, and the subsequent ushering in of the new. Houses had to be cleaned, debts paid and minds cleared of impediments, demons cast out and good fortune brought in, the body emptied and cleansed, so that the New Year could

begin without the wear, soil, pollution and worries of the old.³⁵⁹ Not to do so, as Genji in the *Maboroshi* chapter, was to miss the opportunity for personal revival that the New Year offered, the renewal of hope and spirits brought about by returning to the powerful time of beginning, when (re)creation is possible. Thus it is at the end of this chapter that we see Niou anxiously running about “exorcising devils that the New Year might begin auspiciously,” an attempt to drive out the lingering past that has its grip on Genji. But Genji, though amused by his efforts, is still engulfed in old sorrows, and can only think about having to leave him. He compares himself to the old year, which dies, unable to renew itself, and is replaced by another (in this case, the next generation, Niou). This narrative suggests what Eliade has proposed, that the very possibility of renewal is premised on the shedding of the old, not the half measure of accreting onto it. Abolition comes first, re-creation after. Thus it was that the first ceremony of the New Year at the Imperial Court was the exorcism ritual of *shihōhai* (四方拝) or “purification of the four directions.” The ceremony for the presentation of official congratulations, the *kissho no sō* (吉書の奏), on the other hand, did not take place until the second or third day.

The presentation of these congratulatory notices, or *kissho* (吉書・“auspicious writing”), must also be examined, along with poetic letters, presentation poetry sheets, seasonal aesthetics and congratulatory New Year’s poetry, as an essential part of the background of surimono, particularly here in regard to surimono’s ritual functions. The custom of writing and presenting *kissho* seems to have originated with the *kissho*

³⁵⁹ In this connection, see *Kagero nikki, Anna ninen*, in which the author states: “the old year passed as all the other years, and the New Year came. It occurred to me that my unhappiness might be due to the fact that I did not observe fasts and penances as rigorously as most people. This year, I told my household, I would follow all the accepted prescriptions and see what would come of them.” This translation is taken from Edward Seidensticker’s *The Gosamer Years* (Tuttle, 1973), 71. It is worth noting that many celebrated Japanese diaries begin at the time of the New Year or just before, taking this “fresh start” as an opportunity for creativity, as well as an appropriate “beginning” with which to initiate a narrative.

no sō, a palace ceremony in which high-ranking nobles read aloud from their formal notes of New Year congratulations and offered them to the emperor.³⁶⁰ With the spread of the practice, however, *kissho*, significantly, came to be made not only at the New Year, but also with changes of rank, era names, imperial reigns, and mourning status, all important new beginnings in the lives of individuals and their world. The *Nihon rekishi daijiten* calls them “lacking in meaningful content,”³⁶¹ but the meaning of these notices, like celebratory poems, was located in the ritual rather than literal implications of their language. Specifically, *kissho* were said to drive off evil and ill fortune, utilizing auspicious words and prayers for good luck.³⁶² But their actual function lay in the formal declaration—made together with and in front of the important figures in one’s life—of unbroken goodwill and continued singularity of intent after major transformations in worldly or personal affairs, thereby implying unity with one’s fellows and properly re-establishing one’s relationships in the social realm. The ritual message of *kissho* presentation, therefore, is the reassurance that nothing has changed, despite the upheavals of time or one’s place in the world—but they represent too a fresh, clean start, a clarification of positions, and a return to those basic feelings of allegiance that lie at the foundation of relationships. Far more than just a simple re-statement of one’s loyalty to the imperial house and its representatives, then, the ideology at the heart of this practice was to make political alignment a pre-condition of life, both social, in the maintenance of human relationships, and cosmological, in the re-establishment of the social order in the

³⁶⁰ There are varying accounts of how this ceremony was conducted, based on different *kambun* sources from different times. In most versions (for example, *Nihon kokugo daijiten* 627), *kissho* were read to the emperor, and then formally presented to him. But in Nishitsuyoi Masayoshi’s account in the *Nenjū gyōji jiten* (Tōkyōdō, 1962), 255, folded *kissho* were presented at the end of a *tsue* to an intermediary, then read by the emperor and returned.

³⁶¹ (Kawade shōbo, 1974), 442

³⁶² Kurabayashi, Shōji in *Nihon matsuri to nenjū gyōji jiten* (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1983), 143. See also the *Kogo daijiten*, 56.

newborn world. Simply put, by reaffirming the emperor at the center in the New Year *kissho no sō*, the constellations of relations around him also reformed, as people resumed their “natural” places in the world order.

The political implications of *kissho* practice help in part to explain its transmission to the great warrior houses as they assumed increasing power. There, New Year *kissho* were incorporated as part of the first day ceremonies of *hatsutōjō* (初登場) and renamed *kissho hajime* (吉書初). This, moreover, from the Muromachi Period,³⁶³ became aligned with the *kakizome* (書初め) or first calligraphy of the year, one of many New Year ritual “firsts” intended to start the season on the right track. The conflation of these two practices suggests how the very act of preparing *kissho*—summoning the focus and concentration required by the calligraphy, sacrificing time and materials for another’s benefit—implicitly expressed seriousness, respect and admiration, even as the content of these pieces seems to have become more formulaic, and customs for use more varied. Although *kissho hajime* could still occur in a group setting, the unification with *kakizome* meant that it gradually became a household practice, with the result displayed not to emperor or shogun, but hung in a fortunate direction (吉方 • *kippō*) as a personal talisman. These sheets, which contained auspicious expressions and wishes for the year, were sometimes gathered, read and burned on the fifteenth, so that the prayers they contain could reach the gods, a custom analogous to *tempitsu*.³⁶⁴ In warrior hands, the political function of *kissho* also became far more blunt in its establishment of worldly order, with allotments of rank and stewardship given directly in the *kissho hajime* ceremony itself.³⁶⁵ In a related branch of the practice, which evidences the fact that *kissho* were originally read aloud,

³⁶³ Kurabayashi (1983), 143

³⁶⁴ See my discussion of *tempitsu*, written, ritual New Year prayers for good fortune in the Introduction. There is some question as to how early this burning practice was instituted, which may help to explain the scarcity of extant *kissho*.

³⁶⁵ See, for example, *Azuma Kagami*, Bunji 5 (1189)

notices for the promulgation of law to peasants (定め書き・*sadamegaki*) also came to be called *kissho*, and like the original, imperial *kissho no sō*, were an important display of political authority, albeit with presentation now proceeding in the opposite direction.³⁶⁶ In consideration of the diverse meanings and uses of *kissho* by the beginning of the Tokugawa Period, it is difficult to posit the *kissho* itself as a direct source of influence on the creation of surimono. Nevertheless, even after its dispersal into varying forms, the original practice of *kissho*, as a written New Year presentation that functioned to reaffirm relationships and establish group solidarity through ritual uses of language, did survive in other customs now to be examined, most obviously in New Year letters, but even to some extent, in the formal presentation of poetry at New Year's contests. These customary aspects of *kissho*, especially as ritually auspicious uses of language, rather than their particular content or format, were important for the development of surimono, and require further examination.

Go-kai Hajime and Saitan Gajō: Poetic New Year Get-Togethers, Near and Far

The *uta-awase* (歌合せ・“bringing together/comparison of songs”) was another aspect of the public face of poetry at the Heian court, and after. These poetry competitions consisted of a series of rounds in which two teams—arbitrarily assigned, and labeled the Left and the Right after political designations—presented poems on set themes for comparison. A judge determined the better poem for each round, or declared a draw, giving a critical opinion, and the winner of the most rounds took the overall victory. Such poetry contests ranged from light, social entertainment to intense bouts of aesthetic competition, and allowed for the sublimation of potentially disruptive forces of rivalry at Court, as well as creating pleasurable and highly

³⁶⁶ See Nakano Yasuhide, *Shūgi kissho jufu: chūsei sonraku no jujutsu*, (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1988), 123-125

memorable occasions. A great deal of ceremony and physical accoutrements accreted around the poetry itself, from costumes and *suhamas* (trays with miniature landscapes) to the forms of poetic presentation on *tanzaku* or *kaishi*. It is noteworthy, in the context of *surimono*, to see how poems were at times physically placed with objects, written on small pieces of paper hung in thematically suitable places within the *suhamas*, for example, at the 913 Teiji-in contest, or connected with objects at *mono awase*, comparisons of things. *Kyōka* *surimono*, in particular, also involved the matching of verses with images of related physical objects, and thus bear a relation to these early *awase* contests, a connection to be explored.³⁶⁷ Like most *surimono*, the content of poetry at these competitions seems to have been relatively conventional, the quality in general mediocre, though it has been estimated that 7% of the poetry in Imperial anthologies did derive from such contests.³⁶⁸ The practice, established at these poetry meetings, of composing on a pre-determined theme rather than from immediately felt experience, surely had something to do with this fact, though harmony and smoothness, rather than experiment and surprise, seem also to have been the goals of the *uta-awase*, in keeping with their social and political function.

Although less directly connected with the New Year holiday than customs like *ga no uta* or *kissho*, the first poetry meetings of the year, *go-kai hajime* (御会初め), typically took place just after the close of the New Year holiday. The term *go-kai* is an honorific abbreviation of *kakai* (歌会 • “poetry meeting”)—the very lack of need to specify the nature of the meeting underlining the implicit importance of such meetings (and poetry) at the Court. Though related to *uta-awase*, *kakai* were not competitions (at least in form), but rather formal occasions to present poetry to the

³⁶⁷ Sets of objects were often employed as the motivation for *kyōka* composition, and especially in *surimono* in series based on concepts such as the “36 shells,” “53 Tōkaidō Stations” or “three hats.”

³⁶⁸ McCullough (1985), 241, after Minegishi. Also 249 for McCullough’s notes on conventionality of imagery in poetry contests.

emperor and court. Their format was apparently set as early as the mid-tenth century, in the creation of the *kakai shiki* (歌会式), or ceremony for poetry meetings, and the historical record suggests *kakai* were often performed in conjunction with festivals, such as the ninth month moon viewing, though they could occur at any time of year—or anywhere.³⁶⁹ The *Kumano kaishi*, for example, were created as a result of a *kakai* held by Emperor Go-Toba, while making pilgrimage to Kumano in 1200. According to an entry in the *Azuma kagami* (東鏡・“Mirror of the East”), there was such a poetry meeting on the sixteenth day of the first month of 1261, while additional thirteenth century sources record similar gatherings on the thirteenth and seventeenth, timing likely changing in accord with auspicious calendar days.³⁷⁰ One of the last of the New Year “firsts,” then, the *go-kai hajime* was a formal occasion on which to set the precedent for successful poetry composition throughout the coming year. The actual order of events and content of the poetry at these “first meetings” is uncertain, modern accounts of them influenced and obscured by their contemporary revival at the imperial court, but it does seem that they, like *uta-awase*, were presentations of poetry on pre-determined subjects.³⁷¹ Interest in them at the turn of the nineteenth century³⁷² surely influenced, gave particular connotations and a sense of historical resonance to the “first meetings” of *kyōka* poets, the New Year surimono exchange parties. From the mid-seventeenth century, *haikai* poets had their own first meetings as well, the practice of *saitan biraki* (歳旦開き・“Opening the New Year”) for which they composed New Year verses, published in surimono and special New Year albums.

³⁷⁰ Described in Philomene, Marie. *The New Year's Party at the Imperial Court* (Tokyo: Hokuseidō Press, 1983), 3

³⁷¹ Kurabayashi (1983), 54 quotes an 1804 account of medieval *go-kai hajime* that took place in the houses of major poetry families, the Nijō, Reizei and Asukai, as well as the imperial palace.

³⁷² Ibid

Unlike their immediate exchange at the “first meetings” of *kyōka* poets, *surimono* in its *haikai* form, until the late eighteenth century, seem not to have been given in person, but rather sent to their recipients, in the manner of letters. Inscribed envelopes survive for many early *haikai* *surimono*, as they do not for later *kyōka* works, while records such as the diaries of Yanagisawa Nobutoki clearly reveal a pattern of sending and receiving, rather than face-to-face meetings.³⁷³ The model for these works, therefore, is not so much the practices of New Year visitation, presentation of congratulations or first ceremonies, as it is the alternative for these occasions, when one could not be in the presence of the other, the handwritten letter. *Genji Monogatari*, once again, provides us with an example of such a practice, in the *Ukifune* chapter:

Around noon on a day early in the New Year...a little girl came running in and handed the princess a thick letter in a fine, cream-colored envelope. With it was a small basket attached to an artificial seedling pine....

The letters are from Uji, some distance from Niou’s palace in the capital, and the writer first apologizes for having been out of touch. Niou, surreptitiously reading the note after intercepting it, is disappointed by its lack of content, but like many other New Year greetings and get-togethers, the purpose of such a letter was simply to re-establish connections and good relations in the changed light of the new season, to be used when circumstances prevented direct contact.

Such letters, in their formal version called *gajō* (賀状), or notices of congratulations, were a more prosaic form of *ga no uta*, and essentially represent a written version of the customary New Year greeting. Examples of such congratulatory letters can be found among the archives of early *renga* and *haikai* masters, highly literate men whose calling took them to, or drew important patrons from, various parts

³⁷³ In addition to the section translated in Chapter 1, another has been printed in *Edogaku jiten*, 490.

of the country, making the sending of such notices the only way of maintaining vital relationships at the New Year.³⁷⁴ In such cases, these formal congratulatory notices also included poetry, often at its close, as a felicitous summation of the spirit of the New Year. The transition from such notices to *surimono* as a means of keeping important relationships active and alive, yet without all the trouble of creating a hand-inscribed note for each recipient, comes as a result of the possibilities of woodblock print technology, which could capture both the effect of hand writing and the function of the expression of consideration for another, even if obligatory, at the New Year. In one sense, then, we can see the emergence of *surimono* as the result of a need for maintaining social relations across broad expanses of geographic space, in the new organizations of communal and social life established by *haikai* poetry groups.

Linked verse, especially in its *haikai* version, was by its very nature a social art, bringing likeminded people together for the creation of a group project, a subtle conversation in poetry larger than any single participant, which necessarily involved other sorts of social interaction as well. But *kasen* were not the only occasions for *haikai* poets to get together. In their busy social calendars, there were all manner of events, seasonal and manufactured, for gathering to compose verse, whether linked or individual *hokku*, including *tsukinami kuawase* (月並句合・“monthly poetry meetings,” “*tsukinami*” for short), parties for verse-capping (前句付け・*maeku-zuke*) and point-taking (点取り・*tentori*) at which *haikai* masters presided.³⁷⁵ More

³⁷⁴ See *Haijin no tegami* (Seishōdō shoten, 1993). There are also hints of such social networking at the New Year even in Buson’s letters of the eighteenth century. See Hisamatsu Sen’ichi, Ed., *Koten haibungaku taikai*, V. 12: *Buson* (Shūeisha, 1972).

³⁷⁵ *Maeku-zuke* was an early *haikai* practice, coming directly out of *renga* practice guides. It consisted of adding either a 14 or 17 syllable verse to a pre-existing 17 or 14 syllable verse, to make a complete 31 syllable *waka*. The game in most forms of *haikai* was to be as clever as possible with one’s addition. By the late seventeenth century, *maeku-zuke* had transformed from a learning practice for students to a way for *haikai* masters to make money, by setting the initial verses and judging the results. Events based on *maeku-zuke* became so popular by the turn of the eighteenth century that they grew into something like a mass lottery, eventually drawing unfavorable attention from the Tokugawa Bakufu. *Tentori* *haikai* developed from the practice of *haikai* masters (starting with Teitoku) assigning points to the verses of their disciples as a means of judging them. At *tentori* parties, however, the standards of

casually, as *haikai* was not only a form of poetic composition but also a special mode of communication, whenever two people involved in the movement met, verses were certain to result.³⁷⁶ Even in the solitary composition of *hokku* the possibility for response was always implied, and sometimes provided.³⁷⁷ Links, in short, were not only between verses, but also between people. Around major *haikai* poets developed constellations of disciples—poetry groups, each of which, especially in the turbulent half-century that gave birth to *surimono*, stood for somewhat different aesthetic principles and poetic purposes.³⁷⁸ Because of the broad reach of *haikai* groups, these disciples were not always physically in the presence of the leading poet. Rather, having read or heard of the poet, they may have arranged to receive direct instruction for a period, before returning to business or duties in a different province. Such vast networks of connections, for example, allowed Bashō and others to travel, lodging overnight in inns when necessary, but staying with these patrons for longer rest stops along the way. It also led to uses of *haikai* for explicitly social purposes, which, as we have seen earlier with *waka*, influenced the content of the poetry. *Aisatsu haikai* (挨拶俳諧), or *haikai* as greeting, often took place between a host and a guest, beginning with praise for the host and the place of his lodging, defused in the humility of his poetic reply, but such praise for the host could also be subtly included within a set of linked verses, particularly in an opening *hokku* or as a felicitous note at the close.³⁷⁹

judgment were widely abused, with *haikai* masters awarding high points to mediocre verses as a way of pleasing patrons and making money. These events were also wildly popular in the eighteenth century.

³⁷⁶ See, for multiple examples, *Tōkaidōchū hizakurige*. Or, for more serious exchanges, *Oku no hosomichi*.

³⁷⁷ Bashō's "furukeya" poem, known as the world's most famous "haiku," was immediately capped, for example, by Kikaku: "spider's nest, hanging on young reeds."

³⁷⁸ The history of *haikai* can be read as a series of pendulum swings between conservative and innovative poets, as well as poets who wished to employ *haikai* for serious purposes, and those who thought its primary use was humor and play. The early eighteenth century was a particularly contentious time, with the various followers of Bashō competing for place, against one another and also against the most comic-oriented Edo poets of the Sentoku line, who disparaged Bashō's verses as "thin."

³⁷⁹ See Shirane, "The Poet as Guest" in *Traces of Dreams*, 160-184.

These private references, beneath the surface and often easy to miss, will be found too in both the poetry and imagery of *surimono*. But for the moment, of more importance is the maintenance of social relations between poets and their widespread, but vital disciples and patrons. For unlike the aristocratic composers of *waka*, *haikai* poets were only rarely from families of privilege, and in most cases had to rely on income from their own labor and/or the patronage of clients to get by. The competition of different poetic groups, and of the poets within them, therefore, was not simply a battle for aesthetic dominance, but for material survival as well.

The struggle for artistic (and financial) supremacy in the *haikai* world reached its peak of intensity, not coincidentally, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, at just the time that the genre of *surimono* was born.³⁸⁰ Practices like *surimono* and *tentori* (“point gathering”) *haikai* were intended to draw attention, prestige and funds to *haikai* groups, although most *haikai* poets, even its greatest masters, were never entirely free of concerns for survival. The extant letters of *haikai* poets reveals this situation quite clearly. Mark Morris, for example, has conducted a thorough study of Buson’s letters to his patrons, which include a few with greetings for the New Year, concluding that it was only through his network of contacts in the *haikai* world that Buson was able to eke out his living as a painter.³⁸¹ But by Buson’s time, the role of the hand-written New Year letter of congratulations (*gajō*) as a means of maintaining contacts and cultivating patronage had already been partially usurped by the woodblock printed poetic presentation, either *saitanchō* (New Year albums) or

³⁸⁰ Haruo Shirane, *Traces of Dreams*, 156-157. Competition arose not only from the conflicting interests of schools, particularly after the death of Bashō in 1694, but also the excessive number of *haikai* teachers.

³⁸¹ “Group Portrait with Artist: Yosa Buson and his Patrons” in *18th Century Japan: Culture and Society*, 87-105. A yet broader study of the economic conditions of *haikai* poets and the effect of these circumstances on their work is Yokota Toshiko’s *Buson as Bunjin: The Literary Field of Eighteenth Century Japan*. Buson’s letters, incidentally, contain invaluable information on the production and economics of *surimono* in his time, including the only available references to cost and production size.

surimono. In a letter dated late in Anei 4 (1775), for example, Buson provides a fascinating insight into the New Year obligations of master *haikai* poets, apologetically explaining that he will not be able to produce a *shunchō* (春帳・“spring album,” another term for *saitanchō*) this year, as he has been suffering from sickness.³⁸² The many critical references to surimono in Buson’s letters, as well as similar notes sent by other poets,³⁸³ reveal the importance of this form as a means of social contact for *haikai* poets and their patrons, as does Buson’s fretting over his personal image created by those surimono bearing his name. Although these works were expensive to produce, their results as advertising bore great benefits for the competing *haikai* masters.

It is no great leap, then, from a handwritten New Year communication, which in its formal version utilizes the very same split format sheet we have seen in relation to *renga kaishi*, to the format and production of early surimono. As woodblock-printed works, surimono could be mass-produced and sent to as many connections as one wished, however far flung, not only making a personal connection and showing consideration with an appropriate New Year gift, but also keeping the recipients involved in the activities of the main poetry group, and perhaps even inviting them to participate in the next seasonal production. Here we touch upon what seems to be the most immediate motivation behind the birth of surimono—not only a warm-hearted holiday practice, intended to re-establish contacts in the New Year, to create an atmosphere of felicitousness and an impressive display of poetic talent, but also a means of keeping a leading poet’s economic blood flowing, and of maintaining his position in the poetic world. Certainly economic survival was not the motivation for a

³⁸² *Koten haibungaku taikei*, V. 12: *Buson* (Shūeisha, 1972) 443 (Letter 174).

³⁸³ See Katō, Sadahiko’s “Haikai surimono jijō—Bunseiki Kamigata wo chūshin ni” in *Edo Bungaku* Vol. 16, 1996, 64-82.

figure like Rantai, the surimono commissioning *daimyō*, but his very patronage of the poets in Edo with whom he associated, and whom he included in his surimono, reveals the importance of having wealth and power on one's side. Moreover, the fight for place—friendly and playful as it may have been externally, in meetings within and between groups—was not openly for material advancement, but rather for the achievement of recognition, social capital. Surimono, therefore, a cutting-edge form one step above the *saitanchō*, which had become standard by the time surimono emerged, can be seen as the physical manifestation of the desire of haikai poets to stand out from the pack, to be new, bold and innovative not only in their poetry, but in its presentation.

Saitangin, Saitan Mitsumono, and Saitanchō: New Year Practices of Haikai Poets

Thus far, I have discussed the customs, models, formats, and motivations that helped lead to the emergence of a distinctive surimono genre in the early eighteenth century, providing this form with a meaningful structure and historical resonance. It remains to explore the specific poetic genre of these works, which will tie together many of those aspects of the New Year and courtly poetic practice already discussed, revealing their particular application in the world of seventeenth century *haikai* poetry. Lest this approach be misunderstood as affirming something like a continuous Japanese poetic tradition, or worse yet, a monolithic Japanese culture, however, it is important to emphasize that I am talking about an *application*—a conscious utilization of traditions, as they were experienced or known in the seventeenth century, for the particular purposes of that time—and not some unbroken stream of practice emerging naturally from a unified and timeless Japanese essence, be it national, racial or cultural. I will treat this issue in greater detail in the conclusion to this chapter.

The transition from the poetic practices of the Heian court to those of *haikai* poets in the seventeenth century may seem like a wishful, impossible leap across a vast expanse of time, but is, in the limited sense in which I am making it here, in fact bridged by three key factors: first, the cyclical and ritual nature of New Year festivities, the very practice of which enforced regular, seasonal repetition of what had come before, as though to undo the movement of time; second, the tradition-oriented practice of *waka* poetry, which also preferred stasis and repetition of old ideals to innovation and change, although change did occur, largely through individual interpretations of what the old, “unchanging” ideals were; and third, the attention given to classical poetic practices by *haikai* poets, who sought to appropriate high culture and transform it into something of their own. The one example of this latter tendency I will examine closely here is the use of New Year poetry by *renga* and *haikai* poets, a genre that they labeled *saitangin* (歳旦吟・“dawn of the year songs.”) According to the 1713 *Kokkei zatsudan* (滑稽雑談・“Comic Miscellany”), in 1589 three *renga* poets, led by Satomura Jōha 里村紹巴 (1524-1602), dedicated a series of such *saitangin*, doubtless on *renga*-style *kaishi*,³⁸⁴ to the Kitano Shrine, instituting a practice thereafter known as “*saitan mitsumono*” (歳旦みつ物)—literally “three things for the dawn of the year,” but hinting at *mitsugimono* (貢物) or offering, thus “dawn of the year presentation.”³⁸⁵ The classic *saitan mitsumono* consisted of three sets of three linked verses, 5-7-5, 7-7 and 5-7-5 (*hokku*, *waki*, *daisan*) per set, with each of the three poets participating—typically a *haikai* master with his leading disciple(s) and/or close friend(s) and patron(s)—taking a different verse position in

³⁸⁴ The work does not survive, but given the historical context, it is difficult to imagine the presentation of linked verses in any other format, this being both the standard of the time and the only feasible way to fit an extended series on a presentation sheet.

³⁸⁵ Kira Sueo, “Saitancho e-haisho tashokuzuri haisho” in *Edo Bungaku* 25 (Pelikansha, 2002) 29. The poets who performed with Jōha were his sons, Shōshitsu (1541-1603) and Genjō (?-1607).

each set.³⁸⁶ In keeping with the spirit of the *saitangin*, the content of this poetry was auspicious, utilizing standard spring and New Year imagery in a bright, pleasing manner.³⁸⁷ The practice thus appears as a hybrid between the classical celebratory New Year poem and the activities of *renga* poets, creating a series of linked New Year verses composed by a group, rather than the single poem of an individual. A handwritten copy of a 1615 *saitan mitsumono* led by Matsunaga Teitoku 松永貞徳 (1571-1653)—Jōha's most important pupil who was of cardinal importance in establishing *haikai* as a serious form—has survived, and Teitoku's continued involvement marked the transition of *mitsumono* from classical *renga* to *haikai* poetry.³⁸⁸ Around this time or shortly thereafter, the composition of *saitan mitsumono* became a standard, even obligatory practice for poetry masters, who met with their pupils and patrons in the New Year's first poetry gathering (*saitan biraki*) to create and exchange them.

These short sets of nine verses, suitable for inscription and distribution on a single sheet, began to be woodblock printed in Kanei 寛永 16 (1639).³⁸⁹ Although these early pieces do not survive, they could in fact, as woodblock printed poetry presentation sheets, privately commissioned and given as gifts at the New Year, be considered as the first *saitan surimono*.³⁹⁰ Reviewing the early eighteenth century *surimono* introduced above, we can see traces of the practice of *saitan mitsumono* in the first extant *surimono*, which includes three poems each by Ransetsu and his leading disciple, with a single set of *mitsumono* on the *seibo* theme, and more directly

³⁸⁶ The standard order for poets was A, B, C / C, A, B / B, C, A. Thus each poet had the first, second and third links once in the full *mitsumono*.

³⁸⁷ Examples of *saitan mitsumono* are given in Figures 14 and 15.

³⁸⁸ Kira (2002), 29.

³⁸⁹ *Haikai daijiten* (Meiji shoin: Tokyo, 1961) 243, following a period source. See also Kira (2002), *ibid.*

³⁹⁰ Most likely, judging from later versions of *mitsumono*, they fit the description of *surimono* in everything but format and materials. Later *mitsumono* are plainly printed on small, standard use paper (*minogami*), not the rich *hōshogami* (presentation paper) of *surimono*. Whereas the former was used widely in commercial publications, and so appeared ordinary, the latter retained the exclusivity required of a suitable presentation.

in other early surimono, such as the 1735 *Hanjan Tantantei Saitan*, which includes a complete *mitsumono* in its classical form, plus an extra set of three linked verses. But both of these works, like most surimono, contain groups of individual, unlinked *hokku*, by a series of different poets. How was it that the short, linked verse sequences of *saitan mitsumono* transformed into collections of *hokku* in surimono?

To understand this practice, we must trace the *saitan mitsumono* development into *saitanchō*, or New Year albums. Terminology here is convoluted, particularly as period usage and modern definitions differ; but I will attempt to align the two. First, it should be clarified that *saitan mitsumono* can refer to either a practice (a genre of *haikai* composition) or a material form (the written or printed version of a *mitsumono*). To this latter, *haikai* poets, no doubt competing with one another for originality, interest and inclusiveness of pupils and patrons, began to add an extra section, which they called *saitan hikitsuke* (歳旦引付・“dawn of the year promotions.”) These *hikitsuke* included a broader variety of pupils than could participate in a *mitsumono*, representing them with a single *hokku* each. Thus, even on a later work like *Hanjan Tantantei Saitan*, the opening *mitsumono* is followed by a section of eleven individual *hokku* entitled *seibo no hiki*, or “A Selection of Year-End Gifts.” It is likely, in light of what we know about later surimono practices, that these additional places were paid for by participants, as a way of defraying the total printing costs, or given to important patrons, as a way of repaying their investments and earning their gratitude. At the turn of the eighteenth century, there seem to have been various terms for these private publications produced by poets at the New Year, now all generally subsumed under a single name, *saitanchō*. One of these, judging by the title of a collection of 75 of them printed in 1704 by Izutsuya Shōbei, a major Kyōto publisher, was *haikai mitsumono*, but examination of the pieces contained in this work reveals that only some of them retain the purity of the original three set *mitsumono* practice, with many more short

sets on individual themes, *hikitsuke* (引付) added, and sometimes even the *mitsumono* form missing altogether.³⁹¹ They are distinct, however, in being single sheet works, like earlier *mitsumono*, and are individually titled with only a year designation. Multiple sheet booklets, on the other hand, were either given a seasonally appropriate title, such as *Kadomatsu* (門松・“The Gate Pine”), a year designation plus *saitan*, or, unexpectedly, considering their more common identification as *saitanchō*, generic titles like *Saitan hikitsuke* or *Saitan hikitsukechō*.³⁹² Not surprisingly, works with such titles dismissed with *mitsumono* much more frequently than the single sheet works, being in the main collections of New Year *hokku*, though single set *mitsumono* are also fairly common. Considering these distinctions in their particular forms and content, whatever their close similarities in layout, style and function, I will follow period usage here in differentiating single sheet works (*mitsumono*) from *saitanchō*.

With *saitanchō*, it is only the weakest aspect of genre definition—format—that keeps them from being labeled as *surimono*, and some scholars, emphasizing the private publication aspect of *surimono*, would actually include them in this genre.³⁹³ For in their development from *mitsumono*, spurred by the competitive concerns of poetic groups, *saitanchō* had taken on content virtually identical to early *surimono*, and even mimicked, in miniature, the form of the bound *renga kaishi* (Figure 14). The main reason for my own hesitation, which may initially sound trivial, is that *saitanchō* do not utilize the paper sizes or materials of a standard poetic presentation, being small booklets for all intents and purposes exactly like a commercial publication, with covers, title slips or inscriptions, and a publisher’s name in the rear. Particularly from

³⁹¹ A broad selection of the *saitanchō* published by the Izutsuya is presented in Tenri Toshokan Wataya Bunko Haisho Shūsei Iinkai, Eds. *Haikai saitanshū* (Yagi Shoten, 1998)

³⁹² 歳旦引付, 歳旦引付帳.

³⁹³ Louise Virgin, a pioneer in the study of *haikai* *surimono* in the West, explicitly includes booklets as part of her definition of *surimono*. See her *Yosa Buson and the Dawn of the Bashō Haikai Revival: The Surimono of a Cuckoo Bird in a Tree* (Dartmouth College Dissertation, 1992), 12.



Figure 14: *Hōei roku tsuchinoto ushi: Saitan hikitsuke* (宝永六己丑歳旦引付). A presentation *Saitanchō* for New Year 1709. Cover with title and binding cords. Wataya Bunko of Tenri Library.

the *ukiyo-e* studies point of view, this last element is an anomaly: commissioned surimono, by definition, were not to contain “commercial” marks such as publisher’s seals.³⁹⁴ More importantly, though multi-page format does not make a work unusable as a presentation—*renga kaishi*, afterall, like *saitanchō*, having consisted of multiple sheets, folded on the bottom and bound on the right in an identical style, with even the same red and white cord as most *saitanchō*—the standard paper quality and printing, small size and book-like appearance of *saitanchō* do not distinguish them as anything special or distinct from commercial productions, and thus inappropriate for formal poetic presentations and therefore substantially different from surimono. Finally, were we to admit *saitanchō* in this genre, it would also be necessary to include later, privately printed, gift books of *haikai* verse, *kubaribon* (配り本), when it is clear from the content, structure and uses of this form that *kubaribon* and surimono are distinct, though related, genres. For these reasons, it seems wisest to treat *saitanchō* separately from surimono, whatever their close relations.³⁹⁵

Regardless of genre issues, the intersections, points of connection and overlap between *mitsumono*, *saitanchō* and surimono make it clear that these forms, however distinct, are intimately linked. Compare this typical 1704 *saitan mitsumono* (Figure 15) with the 1702 *Ransetsu saitan*, noting their virtually identical layout—title, use of *dai* and horizontal orientation—as well as similar calligraphic style. At the opposite extreme, note the highly unusual calligraphy of this 1707 *mitsumono* (Figure 16), and compare it with that of the 1710 *Rantai saitan*, with which it is a close match. Clearly,

³⁹⁴ Though as we will soon see, such was not the case with early surimono. There are examples of commercial intrusion, particularly advertising, in some later surimono as well.

³⁹⁵ It bears note here that some Japanese sources, such as the *Haibungaku daijiten*, refer to New Year surimono as *saitanchō*, focusing on content and making no distinctions of format. The danger with this definition is that it does not allow us to see the historical development of surimono into the nineteenth century. Moreover, although their purposes remained similar, the content of *saitanchō* and surimono diverged in the mid-eighteenth century, surimono advancing according to the new possibilities offered by the format.

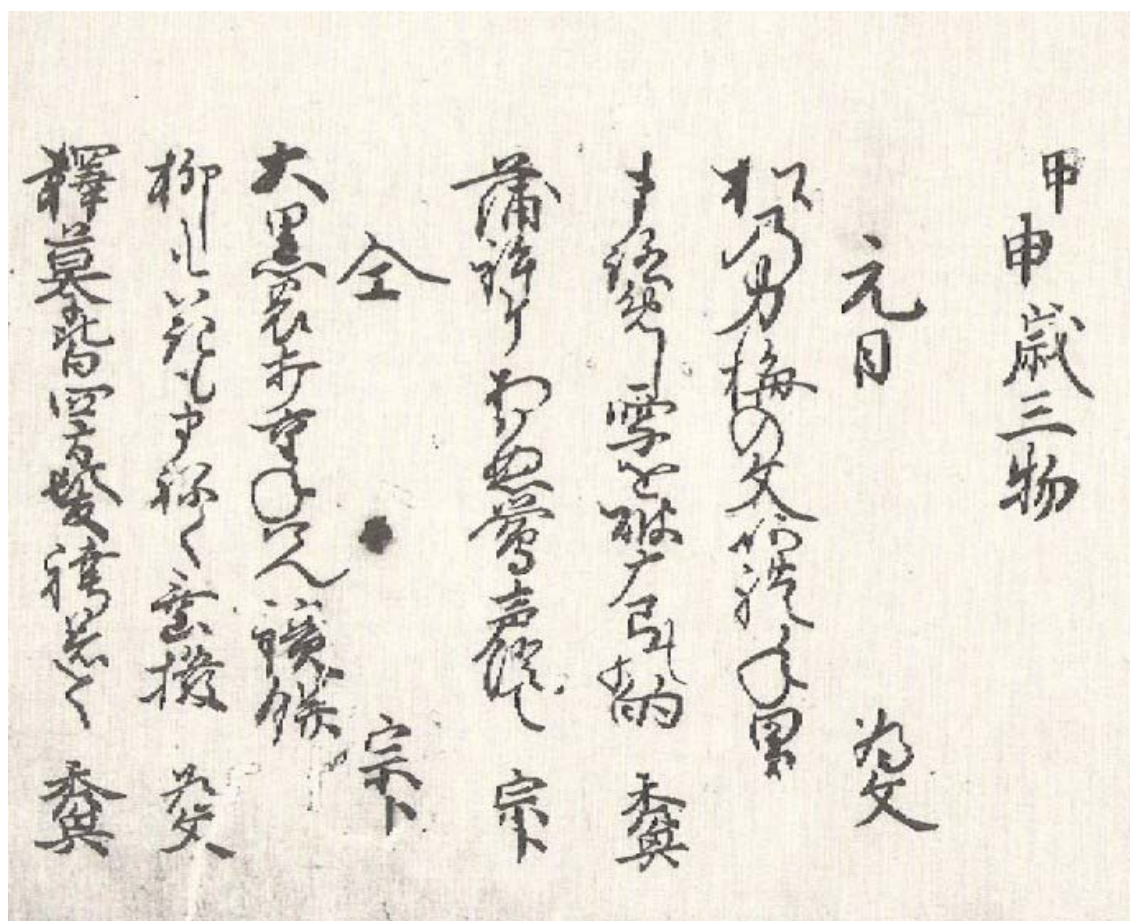


Figure 15: *Kinoe saru toshi mitsumono* (甲申歳三物). A *Saitan Mitsumono* for New Year 1704. Wataya Bunko of Tenri Library.

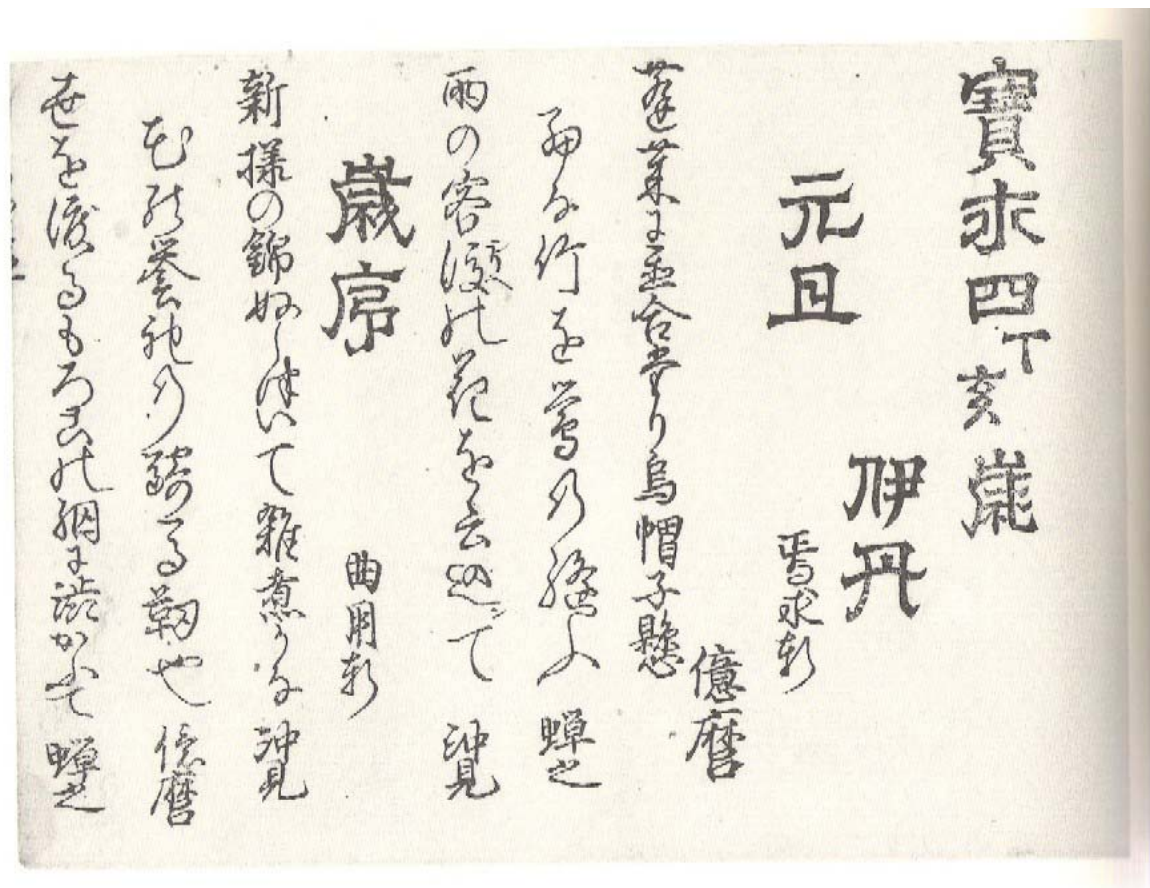


Figure 16: *Hōei yon hinoto i toshi* (宝永四丁亥歳). A presentation *Saitanchō* for New Year 1708. Opening page with *saitan mitsumono*. Wataya Bunko of Tenri Library.

early surimono, *mitsumono* and *saitanchō* were being commissioned and produced by the same groups of people. As evidence that the commissioners of these early New Year productions and surimono were one, we could compare *Ransetsu saitan* to a 1704 *mitsumono* produced by Ransetsu and Hyakuri themselves.³⁹⁶ Similarly, a 1709 *saitanchō* includes *hokku* by many of the figures we will examine in the next chapter as the leading commissioners of early surimono, including Ōmura Rantai, Higuchi Sanyū, Kuwaoka Teisa, Rakushiken Jokō, Mizuma Sentoku, and Kishi Senshū.³⁹⁷ Although these men, like Ransetsu and Hyakuri, were participants in the *haikai* scene in the city of Edo—where publishing houses, though yet lagging behind Kyōto, were rapidly developing—they seem to have continued, at least initially, to use the old, familiar mechanism for the commissioning of *mitsumono*, sending them off to Kyōto for printing. In a 1711 surimono with poems by Teisa, Senshū, Sentoku and Hyōka,³⁹⁸ as well as in the 1710 Kōka surimono with plum tree and lottery prizes we have seen (Figure 9), the Kyōto involvement is inscribed on the prints themselves, for like the vast majority of *saitan mitsumono* and *saitanchō*, these works close with a distinct signature, “Teramachi nijō agaru chō Izutsuya shōbei-ban” (“printed by Izutsuya Shōbei, in the Teramachi ward above Second Avenue, [Kyōto]”). Kyōto continues to be a center of publishing for some later *haikai* surimono as well, as evidenced by similar marks.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁶ See *Haikai saitanshū, san* (Tokyo: Yagi shoten, 1998), 233. An intriguing *mitsumono* in the same 1706 Izutsuya collection contains poems by a Ranyō, who performs with Jokō. As it has been hypothesized (Okamoto in Kira, Ed. 2002) that Jokō may have been an important vassal of Rantai’s, it is also quite possible that Ranyō is Rantai’s early name. This would make this *mitsumono* the earliest known printed work by Rantai.

³⁹⁷ Brief biographies of the early commissioners of surimono are given in Appendix I.

³⁹⁸ Okamoto in Kira (2002), no.5. The connections between these poets will be described in the next chapter.

³⁹⁹ See, for example, “Aichi Kyōiku Daigaku-zō,” no. 78-80 for prints sealed “Kyō-Tachibana” or Tachibanaya Jihei of Kyōto. According to Virgin (1992), Tachibana’s publishing business had surpassed the Izutsuya in popularity by mid-century, being the favorite of Mino-Ise poets.

The firm of Izutsuya Shōbei was the foremost publisher of *haikai* poetry in the late seventeenth century, catering to all manner of poets from the conservative Teimon (貞門・Matsunaga Teitoku and his pupils) to the free-spirited Danrin (談林) school, and on to Matsuo Bashō and his pupils, the Shōmon (蕉門, or 正門 “correct school” to its supporters.)⁴⁰⁰ Its founder, Hyōshiya Shōbei 表紙屋庄兵衛 (1621-1710?), was a noted *haikai* poet himself, a direct pupil of Matsunaga Teitoku under the name Asuiken. His intimacy with the *haikai* world positioned him to receive many commissions, including those of Teitoku himself. A 1715 miscellany by Morikawa Kyoriku 森川許六 (1656-1715), an important follower of Bashō, notes that the Izutsuya was established in 1639, as the chosen producer of New Year works by Teitoku, who himself thus dubbed the business 歳旦みつ物所 (“the place for *saitan mitsumono*.”)⁴⁰¹ As that appellation suggests, Izutsuya’s specialty was commissions for *saitan mitsumono* and *saitanchō*, and to these he often added his name at their close as a kind of advertising. Moreover, a shrewd businessman, having prepared the desired works and delivered the number of copies ordered by his customers, he then took those remaining—or had additional copies made with the printing blocks, of which he retained possession—and had them bound in book form, for sale to the general public. Far from producing an outcry with this practice, which substantially increased his profits, Izutsuya actually used it as an incentive for *haikai* poets—who could thereby be guaranteed of seeing their names in a major, public publication—to commission with him, and in this manner cornered the market. Individual *mitsumono* and *saitanchō* thus became, through this practice, something like first or review editions, sent out as gifts at the New Year by their makers as a sign of personal

⁴⁰⁰ Izutsuya’s most famous publication was surely Bashō’s *Oku no hosomichi*. See Kira Sueo “Izutsuya Shōbei” in *Haisho no Sekai* (Seishōdō, 1999), 274-277. Virgin (1992), 13, credits Izutsuya with 80% of all *haikai* publishing in the Genroku Period.

⁴⁰¹ See “Izutsuya Shōbei,” *ibid.*, 274-277. The work was the *Regidai kokkeiden* (“Comic Biographies Transmitted Over generations”) of 1715.

consideration, while the anthologies of them, such as the 1704 *Haikai mitsumono soroe* (俳諧みつ物揃), would come on the market at about the same time, allowing the general public to compare and contrast the kinds of poetry *haikai* masters and their groups had created for the New Year. The earliest surviving anthology of *mitsumono* dates to 1673, and a series of other extant anthologies representing every few years from that time on suggests that it was likely an annual practice.⁴⁰²

In this context of yearly publications, the emergence of *surimono*—grand sized prints, the size and shape of presentation *kaishi*—can be seen as the next stage in the kind of one-up-manship and struggle for social capital of the kind that had developed simple *mitsumono* into more elaborate *saitanchō*. Utilizing high quality paper and printing, taking a format associated with formal notices and presentation poetry sheets, and soon adding all manner of decorative effects, *surimono* can be described as a deluxe version of the *saitanchō*, but markedly distinguished in form from these now routine New Year publications. The role of the Izutsuya in the creation of this new *surimono* genre is not entirely clear, but their involvement in early *surimono* is crisply inscribed on several of these works themselves.⁴⁰³ Considering their reuse of privately commissioned blocks, the larger, non-recyclable form of *surimono* would not seem to offer an economic advantage to the Izutsuya, potentially taking away one of the incentives of commissioning through them and thus allowing other publishers to take a hold in their market. Yet as *surimono* did not replace *mitsumono* and *saitanchō*, but rather existed alongside them as an alternate possibility, it may be that this form was introduced, by request of a customer or perhaps even by the Izutsuya itself, as an

⁴⁰² Ibid, 276

⁴⁰³ Two of these are no. 2 and no. 5 in Okamoto's catalogue of the Aichi Educational College, dated 1710 and 1711 (Kira, ed. 2002). As the first Izutsuya Shōbei seems to have died c.1709-10, these may have been the project of Izutsuya Shōbei II. The 1710 work also carries the address of the Izutsuya shop, apparently as advertising to poetry groups who might wish to have their own *surimono* produced. See also Okamoto 25, 61

upscale or high-end option. As such, it was more exclusive and private than *mitsumono* and *saitanchō*, by its sheer size not capable of being copied, bound and sold to the public, and therefore too representing a more special and personal sign of consideration at the New Year, one that emphasized the excellence and importance of a poetry group as well as its high estimation of its patrons. One can only imagine the pleasant surprise of surimono's initial recipients, on receiving and unfolding these mammoth poetry sheets at the holiday. Needless to say, in the competitive world of *haikai* groups fighting for distinction and recognition, this next level of practice seems to have been almost immediately instituted as an obligation for those able to afford it, which set them off clearly from those who were not. This pattern will become familiar in surimono's later development, as new innovations that raised the stakes of the practice were often rapidly instituted as standard.

Having traced surimono's background, the structures, conditions and developments that led to its birth, I would like to close this section with some reflections on the nature of surimono, and its definition as a genre, based on the historical evidence of its emergence as a woodblock printed poetry presentation sheet. As we have seen in Chapter One, surimono have traditionally been defined according to four essential traits: deluxe, limited edition works, privately commissioned and printed, given or exchanged as gifts, which functioned as greeting or invitation cards. First, this deluxe nature of surimono, which at times has been mistakenly identified as the central, defining characteristic of this genre,⁴⁰⁴ can now be placed as a secondary trait—albeit still essential—which emerges from the primary use of these prints as

⁴⁰⁴ Consider, for example, the inappropriate application of the term “surimono” to certain deluxe-printed *shunga* (erotic prints) or Osaka actor prints, as in John Fiorillo's “Drama in the Surimono-style Prints of Hoku-ei” in *Impressions*, No.20, 60. New York: Ukiyo-e Society of America, 1998. Though borrowing from the special printing techniques used to make surimono, and also utilizing thick, fine paper, the content of these works bear little resemblance to surimono. They typically lack poetry, and/or are in formats associated with commercial prints. There are, however, many *shunga egoyomi*.

poetry presentation sheets. Though not of itself sufficient to define a work as a surimono, deluxe nature lies at the very heart of surimono's origins, for what distinguishes the poetry presentation sheet from a run-of-the-mill form like *saitanchō* is precisely its rich, grand surface, which is pointedly different in quality and form from any common or commercial item in daily use, thereby assuming the special qualities and exclusivity necessary for the ritual presentation.⁴⁰⁵ In this context, private printing, reflecting the individual tastes of the commissioner rather than the mass desires of the market, rises up as the very source of originality and uniqueness that distinguishes the poetic presentation from the commercial production, and thus also stands as a necessary component of surimono. But again, like deluxe effects, the private printing of a work is absolutely of itself not sufficient to classify a work as a surimono, for any sort of item could be privately printed, in any form, for any use, and at any level of quality.

Likewise, the non-commercial, gift nature of surimono stands out, in connection with their use as presentation poetry sheets, as a truly essential part of this genre, though clearly again, not all printed gifts are surimono. The nature of the gift is apparent not only in materials, preparation and format, which, as described, assert qualities of being special, but also in surimono's content, which expresses in words and images something of the nature of the giver, and of the intimate connection between giver and receiver. "Gift," it must be clarified here, has slightly different nuances from "presentation," for whereas the latter describes the dedication of something of value to another, typically higher power, the gift implies a personal

⁴⁰⁵ Along these lines, consider the following quote by Tanabe Masako, on the qualities of the *hōshogami* utilized in surimono: "In the Edo Period, paper was used sparingly, despite the increasing volume of production. In particular, *hōshogami*, utilized by samurai and aristocratic families, was a treasured item. It was certainly not viewed as a 'consumer good', but seen more in the sense of a 'craft object'." See Kobayashi Tadashi, Ed., *Suzuki Harunobu: Edo no kararisuto tōjō* (Chiba Museum, 2002), 275.

relationship that more deeply influences the character of what is given. Certainly, a gift, like a presentation, must be perceived as unique or valuable, in order to show respect and a willingness to sacrifice for the recipient, but more than just this, it must be suited to the recipient's nature. The most successful gift, therefore, is one that asserts understanding of the other, a unity of mind that connotes a special, intimate relationship. The same cannot necessarily be said of the formal presentation. Part of the development of surimono I will trace in the next chapters, therefore, is the transition of surimono from more formal presentation poetry sheets to something more closely approximating the internal structure of the gift.

Thus far, my historically based definition of the genre of surimono as a poetic presentation sheet has not contradicted the identifying traits of this form made in traditional studies, but rather clarified the exact relationship of these traits to surimono, emphasizing them in particular ways subordinate to the presentation, and so preventing surimono from being superficially identified by any of these traits alone. Where my identification of surimono as a poetic presentation sheet leads me somewhat away from standard definitions, however, is with the fourth trait, the function of surimono as greeting card. For the nature of the surimono gift, though ritual New Year congratulations and re-establishment of personal relations provided its situational context, was not found simply in the greeting function itself, which, although it should not be entirely neglected for this reason, was rote. Rather, the actual meaning of the gift was located in the content of the surimono, of course in the beauty of the material work itself, and often virtually in the images it presented, but still more in the poetry, and its connection with images, and the connection of these to the giver and the recipient, positing their oneness as intimates.⁴⁰⁶ Certainly, as we

⁴⁰⁶ This is an aspect of surimono I will explore later. For the moment, I will allow this description of a surimono by Louise Virgin (1992) to stand as emblematic of what I am here expressing: "[Buson's cuckoo surimono] confidently embodies a pronouncement which only cultured contemporaries 'in the

have seen repeatedly, greeting function influences the nature of the poetry, its mood, imagery and content, while the presentation poem has particularly deep resonances in the context of the New Year. But those studying *surimono* have all too often placed the cart before the horse, assuming that it is the New Year that inspired poets to produce poetry suitable for the occasion, and forgetting that it is poetry that at least in part produces the occasion, giving it its connotations and structure, and more importantly shaping its relevance to the poetic groups. More bluntly put, the greeting obligation of the New Year was an excuse for versifying, and getting together to exchange poetry: the occasion, be it *saitan biraki* or *surimono awase*, was made for the poetry as much as the poetry was for the occasion. Therefore, although the greeting function of *surimono* is not negligible, and certainly had an influence on the form and the way it was constructed and used, to stress the greeting over the presentation of poetry is to miss the point. The greeting was the impetus for the presentation, but not its ultimate motivation or goal.

As a poetic presentation sheet—implying special, deluxe nature and gift-like quality, to which ends private commissioning was essential—given on the occasion of a sacred holiday as a means of establishing and renewing personal bonds, *surimono* can thus be understood as a genre partaking of a long legacy of poetic and seasonal practices. From forms of writing, including letters and presentation sheets, to the various means of making contact and reaffirming relations in the New Year, and from the aesthetics and poetic practices of the Heian court to those of seventeenth century *haikai* poets, the *surimono* genre draws from an enormous range of models, formats, rituals, poetic principles, ceremonies, traditions and motivations that lent the genre a meaningful form and historical resonance from the very moment of its emergence,

know' could easily have understood. While the print can simply be enjoyed as a technically superb, luminous summer image, the bird does not truly sing its song until the imagery has been deciphered and the message echoed by the viewer." 11

while creating, as we will see, a set of influences and structures that were to provide a basis for its subsequent development. But lest we assume that there is some internal, pre-determinative force within the establishment of traditions that shapes everything that comes after them, it is worthwhile, in conclusion, to examine more closely the relationship of surimono to literary and seasonal traditions, particularly as they were utilized in the establishment of this genre.

C. Conclusion: Clarifying the Relationships Between “Tradition” and “Culture,” Poetic/New Year Practices and the Emergence of Surimono

Thus far, my discussion of surimono’s background has focused on various customs, formats and generic practices—in sum, on the traditions of poetry and its relation to the New Year. In so doing, I am aware that I have been walking a fine line between fact and fantasy, between the concrete practices of poets of various times and places on the one hand, and on the other, their relation—which must now be more fully elaborated—to surimono, which were formed, in most cases, in entirely different circumstances. Tradition is a slippery slope, for with its seemingly magical ability to explain discrete phenomena and make them comprehensible, to give them roots that ground them in material with which we are familiar, it is easy to fall into the trap of assuming that we have understood a practice like surimono by illuminating its relation to and locating its place in the long history of something like Japanese poetry, with which it then becomes unified as a part. In other words, tradition as a discursive mechanism implicitly suggests connection, and continuation, it offers to string together and incorporate various individual elements into unified tissues, and these into an organic body—commonly called culture—that in turn gives these phenomena meaning in relation to one another, by making them necessary parts of a whole, thereby even allowing them to transcend time. As an organic, continuous body, constructed by tradition, this is to say, culture can change, a small part grow large, or a

large one atrophy, but it can never die. For even in its changes, the working of tradition as a concept allows us to posit connections, finding the origins of the large in the small, the appearance of the tumor from the healthy cell, the end of one stage of growth as the natural beginning of another, enforcing unity and continuation on even the most drastic of transformations. The problem with an approach based on tradition as an explanatory device, therefore, is that it invariably tends to smooth over the fissures and cracks in history, finding unity where there is subtle multiplicity and difference, and thus leading to the concept of an unchanging, transcendent culture, which is, by its very definition, no more than a model of the present configuration.

Of course, these statements do not in any way imply that traditions do not exist, or that there is no such thing as culture.⁴⁰⁷ The artifacts of tradition and culture—the impress of the past upon the present—are immediately apparent all around us, in the clothes we wear, the words we write, the way we hold our bodies. And classical Japanese poetry, with its set diction and rules for every aspect of composition, its secret transmissions and rejection of innovation, is certainly one of the most past-oriented and tradition-emphatic cultural forms in world literature. But the very construction of the New Year's practices and rituals I have been examining in this section suggest another possible way of looking at, and rhetorically using, tradition. For it should not be forgotten that the succession of the same, or closely related, ritual practices in each New Year season does not proceed of its own accord, like a ball rolling through time; rather these practices are cyclically reinstated, not by nature, but by human will, as though to undo and overcome time through the very

⁴⁰⁷ The only ground on which the concept of 'culture' accurately coincides with experience, however, is when we speak of the culture of an individual. Anything larger, though heuristically convenient, invariably involves generalizations that blur differences and risk distortion. In other words, though there may be a 'mainstream' of shared and informing traditions, there are also always byways, canals, tributaries and cul-de-sacs, factors that generalizations of what 'culture' in the broad sense is do not reach.

repetition of the same. Much of human life—and the concept that we call culture—is based on a similar principle: parents teach children the arbitrary patterns, principles and habits of behavior they were taught as children; children teach offspring. Filial piety is the genetics of culture, and perfect repetition defeats parental death. Though the lessons modeled may be arbitrary, they are not meaningless. Does one eat with hands, knife and fork, chopsticks? Does one sit on the floor, on a stool, on a high chair like a throne? These simple actions determine the nature of one's relationship to one's food, to the earth with its pull of gravity. They fix levels of interaction, mastery, distance, and identity. At the deepest level, they inform human beings how to live, and what the diverse aspects of life are and should mean to them. Culture, at this level, can be equated with a discursive regime, or ideology. It is not something that one can simply reject or live without, being the very basis by which one acts in the world.

But this does not mean that culture and the traditions of which it is composed must be accepted or blindly followed, just as they are given by previous generations. Like New Year rituals, there is nothing in tradition that is inexorable or unchangeable, and so it cannot simply be taken as the ultimate determinant of any given reality. It is inevitable that human beings cannot avoid engaging with the past, as it provides the very medium and structure they are given for even the most minute of actions and communications. But *how* people at any given time chose to engage with their past is the question by which to structure the history of a form, not the simple existence of tradition itself as an explanatory device. Traditions can be unconsciously repeated, but also appropriated for new causes, ridiculed and parodied, or outright rejected, forgotten and left behind. There's no question that built into the habits and customs of the past are certain self-replicating principles—shame, comfort, group behavior, familial love, the social structure and legal codes one must live within or suffer—and

yet change, with remarkable frequency, does occur. Rather than being mapped back onto the unities of culture or historical narrative through tradition as a connective discursive mechanism, such differences should be noted, and their individual qualities respected. For if the concept of tradition is allowed to blur the distinctions between various discrete moments and forms in the history of the past, then, truly, we end up with nothing but a constant, bland repetition of what reality is assumed to be in the present. Let me give a pertinent example.

Annually, in an unbroken succession from 1869, a curious “restoration” of *go-kai hajime*, the first poetry gathering of the New Year, has taken place at the Imperial Palace in Tōkyō. Now called *utakai hajime* (歌会初め), or in its official English title “The New Year’s Poetry Party at the Imperial Court,” the ceremony is structured as an award presentation for the winners of a yearly *waka* contest on a set theme. In a colorful room, decorated with vivid standing screens, dignitaries and contest winners in formal dress gather before the imperial family to hear the chosen entries for the year solemnly sung in an exaggerated manner by special chanters.⁴⁰⁸ This is followed by *waka* composed for the occasion by leading members of the royal family and their selected “poet laureate” of the year—presented in hierarchical order, with the penultimate song of the empress chanted twice, and the climax, the emperor’s poem, three times. A buffet banquet follows the ceremony, at which the emperor meets with the winners and encourages their efforts in poetic composition. These proceedings have been described, by their leading proselytizer in English, Marie Philomene, as the ultimate in courtliness, “a glowing experience of poetry in life,” and one of the oldest observances in the world scene of literary traditions.⁴⁰⁹ Overlooking not only the recent history of Japan’s modern wars but also its medieval rebellions, she identifies

⁴⁰⁸ Kawamoto Kōji, *The Poetics of Japanese Verse* (University of Tokyo, 2000), 244.

⁴⁰⁹ *The New Year’s Poetry Party at the Imperial Court*, 1-2, 10

the imperial court exclusively with poetry and high culture, and therefore peace and prosperity, describing the glorious tradition of the New Year poetry party as having survived, as though underground, through “six centuries” of “[clan] struggles to unite the nation,” before its victorious re-emergence as “[seemingly] one of the first acts of the Emperor Meiji...the forerunner of peace coming to the country after long decades of feudal struggle.”⁴¹⁰

The re-creation of *go-kai hajime* in the *utakai hajime* of the modern imperial court, which in spite of its superficial trappings and anachronistic, imaginative projections of tradition, claims an unbroken line of practice dating back into antiquity, provides a perfect opportunity for me to clarify what this chapter on the background of *surimono* is, and what it is not. For one of the dangers in tracing the background of a genre through older practices, as I have done to this point, is implicitly to posit some sort of timeless essence—national, racial or cultural—underlying the implementation of similar forms and customs over vast periods of time, as though the people utilizing them and the methods and motivations for carrying them out were unchanged throughout history, thereby allowing the present configuration to overwrite the past. The obviousness of the invented traditions underlying the construction of the current imperial *utakai hajime*, the structure, purpose and practice of which bear almost no resemblance at all to the *go-kai hajime* of old,⁴¹¹ thus presents an ideal foil for contextualizing the use of poetic tradition in the birth and development of eighteenth and nineteenth century *surimono*. Rather than simply a neat, continuous growth out of

⁴¹⁰ Ibid, 3

⁴¹¹ In keeping with the concerns of modern nationalism, for example, the *utakai hajime* was opened to the participation of all citizens in 1879, a far cry from the elitism of the pre-modern Court. To reflect current trends of international exchange, moreover, it has been opened to *waka* submitted by anyone in the world. The timing and unrelieved solemnity of the ceremony, the manner of selection, the choice of judges, the division in presentation of poems from within and outside of the imperial family, even the change in reading of characters, all hint at particularly modern concerns, and bear little relation to the *go-kai hajime*.

a millennium of poetic activity, surimono should be emphasized as an early modern practice that intentionally *summons up* particular traditions from classical poetry, in custom, content and material form, seeking to posit a relation thereby, and thus to appropriate this poetry's aura of acknowledged significance for the enhancement of its commissioners. Clearly, the use of tradition is not always that conscious, engaged or self-seeking, and some of its applications, such as the melding of surimono with existing New Year's customs, were doubtless experienced as obvious and part of the natural order—meaning that, in these cases, tradition “used” its followers rather than vice-versa, leading them to certain kinds of practices. But let me be unequivocal: the relations of surimono to the content, utilizations and material formats of classical poetry, as well as to the associated New Year traditions of composition, congratulatory presentation, greeting and gift, do not imply that surimono is part of an unbroken line of Japanese customs and classical aesthetics. Although one can fairly describe early surimono as “woodblock printed *kaishi*” or “oversized *saitanchō*”—or better yet, as *saitanchō* with *kaishi*-style format, or *kaishi* with *saitanchō*-style content—for that is surely how they appeared to their first recipients, it is important to remember that surimono were neither *kaishi* nor *saitanchō*, but rather an entirely new genre that relied on the resonance of these older genres for its meaning. It is in this sense that I refer to surimono as a “neo-traditional” form.

The key difference, to begin with just the most obvious of distinctions between surimono and classical poetry sheets and letters, is in the technology of reproduction. Although relying on the nuances of signification developed around a millennium of handwritten calligraphy—which was taken as an implicit reflection of the disciplined practice, intense concentration and cultivated excellence of the calligrapher—surimono calligraphic texts were in fact block-carved, eliminating any lapses of spirit/brush, and modeled in fact, in most cases, on a clean copy prepared by a

professional calligrapher, rather than the poets themselves. Similarly, while summoning up the intimacy, personal consideration and sacrifices of time, energy and materials implicit in the handwritten letter, surimono were in fact mass-produced forms, not entirely devoid of consideration or sacrifice, but, as these emotional elements were not directed at a single individual but dispersed among many, in truth lacking intimacy. These facts imply that surimono are the products of a different age than the structures they stepped into, an age commercial in nature, with advanced technology and a developed economy that made its division of labor available to anyone who could pay for it. The appearance of cultivation, in other words, was no longer simply the product of one's own character, determination and efforts, as it seemed to be in the world of *Genji Monogatari*;⁴¹² rather, self-enhancement was a commodity, at least in its outward signs, that could be bought. In such a context, then, surimono cannot simply be described as the natural extension of traditional poetic forms into a new age with a different material basis. Rather, they appear as a particular usage, or even manipulation, of the structures of the past, lending the intimacy of the handwritten letter and the connotations of calligraphic style to a form that has nothing whatsoever to do with them.

One could argue that these particular uses of tradition were incidental, not so much consciously planned as the happy accident of applying a new technology to an old structure, and so reaping the benefits of that older structure's cultural meanings, without the efforts or expressiveness they originally implied. In the development of the *kyōka* surimono from the late eighteenth century, however, we can plainly see the manner in which the commissioners of surimono selectively mined the past, processed

⁴¹² Of course, even in this world one required leisure time and access to education, and the wealth and position that provided them, in order to become cultivated. But status and power were not enough to guarantee personal excellence, as seen in the many *Genji* characters with gross personal failings and character flaws, including, to a lesser extent, shining Genji himself.

its materials, and utilized them towards a particular end in these products of everyday life. And seeing the choices they made, the choices of surimono's original commissioners come to seem not so much an unconscious continuation of poetic practices, as rather a designed utilization of past forms to create a specific image of the genre they were shaping. Take, for example, the simple matter of format. Multiple possibilities were available to surimono's commissioners at any given moment in their history. Traditional presentation forms like *kaishi*, *shikishi* and *tanzaku* were in steady use in calligraphic practice, and bound formats in gift booklets such as *saitanchō* and *kubaribon*, while poets could also choose to reject these standard forms to create one of their own. That the first commissioners of surimono invariably chose to base their works on *kaishi*, and in almost all early cases the folded format of renga *kaishi*, whereas later *kyōka* poets, after experimenting with folded *kaishi* and a miniature format based on *egoyomi*, settled on *shikishi* as their chosen format, suggests not only the different needs of these poets, but the particular image of the form they were attempting to create. Specifically, *kaishi* projected a formal, serious kind of poetic presentation, with both deep historical resonances and references to contemporary practice, summoning up the atmosphere of linked verse meetings and the beautiful presentation sheets that emerged from them. On the other hand, *shikishi* called up the world of the classical court, with nuances of colorful, refined decorations and a bright atmosphere of shimmering wealth.⁴¹³ Each form was suited in a particular way to the kind of poetry that appeared on them, and their commissioners' ideals for surimono as a form.

Similarly, although one could attempt to trace a more organic line of development in the practices of New Year poetry, from the accretion and

⁴¹³ There is likely a close connection in this regard between *shikishi* surimono and the chronologically overlapping boom in *Genji-e*, which also emphasized the richness of the Heian court as a fantasy for merchants.

establishment of seasonal references in early *waka* practice to the uses of New Year poetry at the court, then through the filters of *renga* and *haikai* and on to *saitangin*, *saitan mitsumono*, *saitanchō* and finally *surimono*, each step of this process involved certain choices and calculated decisions—an engagement with tradition rather than its blind implementation. In fact, rather than a smooth, organic development, an agreement of minds across the ages, each stage actually represents a disruption, and a rejection of the ones that came before, in an acknowledgement that these were not fully adequate to the needs of its own historical moment. And the same can no doubt be said for changes within each particular form, smaller innovations or adjustments in particular works that led eventually to larger breaks and sub-categories, as we shall see shortly in a discussion of the stages of growth in *surimono*. Literary tradition, in other words, neither proceeds naturally, of its own accord, nor simply peters out like a rocket once its original impulse is gone. Rather, what is given by the previous generation is always considered at some level by the next, repeated if applicable, sometimes even without consciousness of this determination, modified if not. The staunch traditions of classical Japanese poetry, in this light, can be ascribed not simply to the power and majesty invested in this form by its initial practitioners, which impressed future generations so much they had no option but to copy it, but rather to the interests and purposeful investment of later courtiers and poetic families, who sought to set and guard particular versions of these traditions as their own. There are historical and material reasons for the continuation, extension of or return to tradition, then, just as there are for change.

Although the study of *surimono* absolutely must be contextualized within the customs of Japanese poetic and seasonal traditions, without which we can comprehend neither the motivations and conditions out of which the form was born, nor the meanings of format and methods of implementation by which the genre was

understood, we must be aware that these previously existing conventions did not *determine* the birth and particular form of surimono. Let me do away with these passive constructions then, and return agency to the emergence of the form. When the commissioner of the first surimono decided that he wanted to do something unconventional, something grand and surprising that would excite others and raise his own place in the poetry world, he worked through existing and earlier practices, and settled on a form that fit within common, contemporary usage—the New Year gift of poetry—while also summoning up a larger, more elegant past—the formal presentation *kaishi*. Not every aspect of the choice was free: he could not create from scratch structures of production—paper, carving, printing or publishing, as were already in place for *saitanchō*—or of meaning—the significance of the seasonal gift, or of the poetic presentation. He could decide, however, whether and how to manipulate these. Other choices, while not exactly determined, were heavily weighted by customary usage and form: he could have leapt over more familiar traditions to present a *waka* style *kaishi*, but that would not have had as immediate an impact or have been as readily understood, or he could have composed a different style of poetry for his surimono, but that would not have allowed his work to communicate meaningfully with his fellows and existing practices. Rather, as in most transformations within popular culture, his was a combination of the familiar standard, particularly in content and layout, with a dash of novelty, an unconventional, though not unfamiliar, format. Yet from this combination of well-known elements, largely through structures of meaning that had been established in the past, emerged a form with wholly unexpected possibilities.

Chapter Three:

Early Development (1708-1736): A Glimpse from a Daimyō's Library

Surimono emerged, as we have seen in the previous chapter, directly from the practices of *haikai* poets—specifically, their woodblock printed inscriptions of *saitan mitsumono* and *saitanchō* as presentation poetry—in reference to yet earlier traditions of New Year and poetic practices. Far from being a radical new invention, surimono were in fact the result of just a slight innovation, the transposition of a seasonal genre (*saitanchō*) into an alternative format (*kaishi*) that had not previously been utilized for it. Trivial a movement as this may seem, the large, single sheet format of the surimono provided a surface with new possibilities and resonant meanings. Whereas the booklet form of the *saitanchō* had appeared as a contemporary-style production—borrowing the construction of bound, linked-verse *kaishi*,⁴¹⁴ but in miniature and without its special effects—the full sized surimono sheet was not simply a distant echo of the *kaishi*, it *was* for all intents and purposes the *kaishi* presentation sheet itself, in size, shape and quality, albeit woodblock printed. From the earliest surimono on, the use of this esteemed format demanded finer materials and a greater concentration on printing, influenced by the single sheet construction, which brought everything to the surface and did not ‘package’ or conceal the contents beneath a cover.⁴¹⁵ If we can characterize the first surimono as ‘deluxe *saitanchō*,’ such special attention given to their production would seem an essential part of the origin of the surimono form, in keeping with its nature as a woodblock printed version of the poetry presentation sheet.

⁴¹⁴ *Saitanchō* can be considered bound presentation *renga kaishi* in miniature, sharing their folded, horizontal alignment and initially four sheet structure, as well as having identical red and white auspicious binding cords. They were not, however, luxurious in materials or printing techniques.

⁴¹⁵ Many *haikai* surimono, however, did have outer paper wraps, on which the address of the recipient would be inscribed. It is notable that plain surimono of the countryside variety sometimes had fancier, even illustrated envelopes, while the deluxe surimono of the city saved the special effects for the content. See Virgin, (1992), 18.

But surimono did not remain as just ‘deluxe *saitanchō*’ for very long, the grand stage and historical associations provided by this new *kaishi* format leading to experiments that would enhance utilizations of the genre. In this transition, we can see form trump content, or, more specifically, the requirements for an original and/or beautiful poetry presentation sheet, expressing the qualities of oneself and one’s poetic circle,⁴¹⁶ push aside the standard material of the *saitanchō*, gradually replacing it with clever new approaches to content and dazzling surface effects. Most obvious is the addition of larger and more elaborate kinds of illustration, often utilizing cutting edge printing technology far in advance of commercial productions. These enhanced visual aspects of surimono helped to restructure content, as glimpsed already in the illustrated works of 1710—to which we will soon return for a more prolonged view—with thematic images shaping the poetic material and its method of presentation. But in addition to illustration, other non-pictorial experiments in the genre, surimono calendars, commemorative or memorial prints, programs and invitations, also moved the genre forward, away from the standard form of the *saitanchō* anthology page and towards a unified structure based on the kind of witty devices (*shukō*) that inspired the colorful *haikai* verse of its urban commissioners. Nevertheless, whatever heights of imagination or expense the most flamboyant *haikai* poets climbed in competing with one another to make the most striking, inventive presentation sheets, or however other poetic groups may ultimately have defined the field of surimono, according to their particular literary aesthetics, there was one thing that all of these works shared in common—*haikai* poetry. This one aspect of the *saitanchō*’s content was never lost, no matter how layout and surface textures may have changed, no matter what

⁴¹⁶ Competition—and the related desire to attract wealthy patrons—was another factor that led to the rapid enhancement and development of variations in the surimono form. The post-Bashō *haikai* scene of the early eighteenth century was highly competitive, with an expanding number of poetry masters fighting for place and viability. It is no accident, therefore, that *surimono* were popular in groups that emphasized *tentori haikai*, a practice used to draw in wealthy patrons and support poetry masters.

additional uses the works may have served, for as long as surimono was connected with these groups. Nor, having seen how surimono emerged as a poetic presentation sheet, should we expect to find anything else but poetry as the central basis of this form.

In light of this new understanding of surimono's emergence, it is no longer possible to discuss this genre as a subcategory of *ukiyo-e* prints, or even, for that matter, as having emerged from the practices of commercial printmaking at all. As a new genre, surimono did utilize existing networks of labor, technology, material distribution, communications and finance, without which it could not have been born, but these factors, no more than other essential prerequisites such as political stability, urbanization, or economic growth, did not of themselves create the form. In fact, surimono merely assumed a specific pathway already in existence for the private commissioning, printing and distribution of New Year poetry, and its production did not require any major alterations to the system or input from commercial print publishing, even with the eventual introduction of illustration as a fairly standard part of the form.⁴¹⁷ But the literary basis of surimono is apparent in far more than its means of production; its products, more eloquently, speak of its foundation in poetry. Not only are the earliest surimono largely non-illustrated, but also, non-illustrated works with *haikai* poetry will continue to be made regularly to the end of the nineteenth century.⁴¹⁸ Conventional views, then, which attempt to posit surimono as a

⁴¹⁷ Surimono publishers remained a separate group, distinct from the publishers of commercial prints (*ukiyo-e*) and books (*hanpon*). In fact, unlike with most publishers of commercial items, surimono publication often centered on a studio, in which a craftsman (designer, carver or printer) played the organizing role of publisher. Regardless of this fact, however, cross-currents between surimono and commercial prints are extensive, with much mutual interaction and influence. This topic goes beyond the scope of this project, but stated briefly, advances in printing technology, range of subject matter, and interaction of poetry and image in *each* form was enhanced by its relationship with the other.

⁴¹⁸ See, for example, *Haikai surimono zufū* (Tokyo: Seishōdō shoten, 2003). Approximately 500 of the 704 examples of *haikai* surimono in this book are not illustrated. Lack of illustration is less common for *kyōka* works, though not unknown. See Kobayashi (in Carpenter, Ed., *Hokusai and his Age*, 2005) 160 for description of an early non-illustrated *kyōka* set by Hamabe no Kurobito.

branch of *ukiyo-e*, or as a development in commercial printmaking through a private form like *egoyomi*, or even as a primarily artistic form, must be seriously revised. This is not to say that surimono does not become partly aligned with *ukiyo-e* later in its history, or that *egoyomi* exchanges were not a major influence on the development of the form, or even that surimono cannot be treated as works of art, but rather that the literary basis of the form cannot be neglected without distortion. But awareness of the literary dimensions of surimono is important not only for characterizing the nature of this genre. As I will demonstrate in this and subsequent chapters, the varying forms that surimono take, and the growth of these forms through different stages of development, can all be best understood in relation to poetry, or more specifically, in relation to the competing aesthetics and ideals of popular verse (*haikai* and *kyōka*) in the Tokugawa Period.

The Ōmura Rantai Library: *Haikai* in the Early Eighteenth Century

The emergence of surimono, I have argued, was partly the result of the competitive spirit within and among *haikai* groups at the turn of the eighteenth century. The ongoing custom for the re-affirmation of group ties at the New Year in this period was the cooperative creation, private publishing and distribution of *saitanchō*, or New Year albums, typically a small, plain booklet with *saitanku* (歳旦句 • New Year *hokku*) and short sets of linked verse (*saitan mitsumono*). Such publications brought groups, friends and allied poets together in print at the New Year, and in preparatory sessions in the months before, while announcing these alliances and their poetic products through mass distribution to selected acquaintances and patrons. Short, standard format New Year booklets were also anthologized and sold publicly by their main publisher, allowing a wide range of similar works to be examined and compared. In this context, the surimono was born as an alternative configuration for

the New Year publication, using a larger, richer format than the *saitanchō*, and retaining the privacy of the communication, in the manner of a personal poetic presentation. Surimono was thus an elaboration on the *saitanchō* that called special attention to the commissioning poets among its audience, as well as expressing special respect for its recipients, being far grander and yet also, paradoxically, far more intimate than the *saitanchō*. Although *saitanchō* continued to be produced as a regular activity of poets through the nineteenth century, the single sheet poetic presentation format, surimono, quickly became established in those places it was used, primarily the major cities of Edo and Kyōto, as a distinctive means of delivering a poetic New Year greeting. Moreover, although the layout and format of *saitanchō* at the turn of the eighteenth century had become rather standardized—as though to prevent unequal competition in the public anthologies, but more likely for ease of publication—those for the new genre of surimono were open and free. These were circumstances somewhat parallel to those we have seen for earlier *waka* preservation, in which the use of *kaishi* and other presentation formats allowed poets greater control over the inscription of their verses than inclusion in an anthology. Although *saitanchō* too were to develop into more elaborate, inventive productions as the century progressed, the surimono genre from almost its very inception was a fertile ground for experimentation and expression of individual aesthetics.

But before charging on to a discussion of the actual aesthetics shaping the content of early surimono, however, it is necessary to draw back for a moment, and consider more deeply the source of our knowledge and assumptions concerning this genre up to the mid-eighteenth century. For although the 75 Hōei and Kyōhō Period (1704-1736) surimono in the Aichi Kyōiku Daigaku collection would seem to provide a broad base on which to conduct statistical analysis and make conclusions about the nature of this genre in its early phases, in fact, this collection is not an objective,

random sampling of early surimono, but rather represents the narrow, “inside view” of one of its major participants. This was the Hizen *daimyō* Ōmura Rantai 肥前大名大村蘭台 (1670-1737), whose entry into the world of *haikai* poets did not come until 1703.⁴¹⁹ Outside of Rantai’s collection—which was clearly preserved for historical rather than aesthetic reasons, that is, as documents dealing with Rantai’s life rather than for the interest of early surimono—only a handful of other pre-1736 woodblock printed presentation sheets are extant, including the 1702 Ransetsu group work already seen in Figure 7, which was likely saved only by being bound, and a few others to be viewed later.⁴²⁰ This exceptionally poor rate of survival suggests that early surimono editions were probably quite small, and that the prints were in general not carefully kept and safeguarded, at least not by subsequent generations. In a part of the world regularly plagued by storms, earthquakes and consuming fires, not to mention voracious insect larvae, we should not expect unprotected works on paper to last very long. But by contrast, data from the synchronous world of commercial printmaking suggests a very different situation for popular images, with thousands of pre-1736 prints extant.⁴²¹ This stark difference can be partly explained by the sheer, vast

⁴¹⁹ Kira, “Haikai ichimaizuri to daimyōtachi,” in *Haisho no Sekai* (Tōkyō: Seishōdō shoten, 1999), 230. Details of Rantai’s life and poetry will be presented later in this chapter, in conjunction with a discussion of his surimono.

⁴²⁰ Other than Ransetsu’s 1702 work, extant pre-Genbun (1736) surimono outside of the Rantai collection include a two-color 1715 *ichimaizuri* produced by Yamaguchi Sodō (1642-1716) [See Kira (1989), 68], an illustrated 1726 work by the priest Horiuchi Unko (Miyata Masanobu, private collection) a 1732 picture calendar poetic sheet, folded as an *orihon* (located in the Tōendō Bunko) and a 1736 commemorative work for Hayano Hajin (1677-1742; Buson’s teacher and a contributor to some early surimono) by Isaoka Gantō (d.1773). For the latter three, see Virgin (1992), 58, 17, and 23. Extant works also exist in limited numbers from the 1750s and 60s—see Virgin (1992), 21, 59, and also Kira (1999), with a full chapter on a unique and playful *tori-zukushi* surimono in grand size made by Beiō and his associates in 1752. Prof. Scott Johnson has also shared with me a half-dozen surimono from his collection, dating from the 1750s and 60s. Surely other early works will come to light in Japan with the recent rise in attention to *haikai ichimaizuri*. After the Rantai Collection, the next largest grouping of early surimono is in the Wataya Bunko Collection of Tenri Central Library, with surimono largely made between the 1770s and 1803, but also including the Ransetsu work presented here.

⁴²¹ Major collections of early *ukiyo-e* prints can be found in The Boston Museum of Fine Arts, The Chicago Institute of Fine Arts, The Tōkyō National Museum and the British Museum, with hundreds of extant prints dating to before the start of the Gembun Era (1736).

numbers of early *ukiyo-e* designs, many of which, though mass-printed for public sale, survive in but a single copy or two, while others have been lost,⁴²² in comparison with the privately printed surimono of this time, apparently distributed by no more than a few scores of poets to their acquaintances on an annual basis. It has also been suggested that surimono, as gift prints, were more likely to be poorly used and disposed of, as the recipient had no direct financial investment in the piece, and in some cases not much emotional investment either.⁴²³ Although such was probably not the case with early, luxurious surimono, there can be no doubt that, outside of the extensive Rantai collection, almost none remain.

The narrow, though nonetheless deep, view of early surimono provided by the Rantai collection thus leaves us largely in the dark concerning practices outside of Rantai's particular connections to the *haikai* world. For we can see mainly only those works sent to Rantai and preserved by him, and little of surimono practices in other times and places, especially before his involvement in *haikai*, or in groups with which he did not associate. This situation leaves room for vast speculation. The genre of surimono may in fact be much older than its earliest extant examples from the beginning of the eighteenth century (roughly approximate with Rantai's initiation in *haikai*) would suggest, though we have no evidence for this hypothesis. It may also have been much more widely practiced than the largely Edo-based works that have come down to us, or originated elsewhere, though again, there is no certainty that the genre of surimono was either born or in as common an early use outside of Edo.⁴²⁴

⁴²² Lost designs are most apparent in incomplete series, or missing parts of multi-sheet works.

⁴²³ Lane (1989) 26

⁴²⁴ It is enticing to consider the early involvement of Izutsuya Shōbei in surimono publishing, however, and the early extant works bearing his name. That Kyōto, and the Izutsuya in particular, had dominance in the private printing of New Year poetry is suggested by the fact that Edo poets too sent their *saitanchō* to Kyōto for publication, even though a busy publishing industry was developing around them in Edo. Certainly, the Izutsuya's monopoly was due to their reprinting of these works in annual anthologies as commercial editions. The size of early surimono precluded this possibility, however.

The actual history of surimono thus remains partly shrouded in mystery, though the samples we have been given do at least allow us, through context, to postulate how—if not quite where or when—the genre was born. Still more definitively, the Rantai collection provides an extremely well lit view of one man’s involvement in surimono circles and *haikai* practices, suggesting, in spite of the paucity of other sources, just how busy, productive and exciting this world was in the first four decades of the eighteenth century. Whether we can take the cross-section provided by the Rantai collection as representing the whole field of early surimono is highly questionable—for in fact there are actually tantalizing glimpses of a larger circle of surimono practice even in the works he gathered, let alone the few additional ones—and we must question how representative these “glimpses” are of the frequency and kinds of works being made in this larger field. But the Rantai collection, with 75 surimono dating from 1708-1735, does provide detailed coverage of at least one major branch of surimono practice, and hints of other branches, that reveal a great deal about the particular, early uses of this genre, and the aesthetics of some of its individual commissioners.

It was various individual aesthetics, in fact, that dominated the *haikai* scene at the turn of the eighteenth century, after the deaths of Matsuo Bashō in 1694 and Nishiyama Sōin 西山宗因 (1605-1682) had left this poetry world without commanding leaders.⁴²⁵ Friction between the Teimon, the poetry groups following

⁴²⁵ My summary of the early eighteenth century *haikai* scene relies mainly on the following works: For general historical overview and shifts in poetics, Katō Sadahiko’s *Haikai no kindaishi* (Wakagusa shobo, 1998), Donald Keene’s classic study of Tokugawa literature, *World Within Walls* (Holt, 1976), and Louise Virgin’s doctoral dissertation *Yosa Buson and the Dawn of the Bashō Revival* (Dartmouth, 1992). On Kikaku, Tanaka Yoshinobu’s *Genroku no kisai Takarai Kikaku* (Tokyo: Shintensha, 2000), and Imaizumi Junichi’s important studies, *Genroku haijin Takarai Kikaku* (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1969) and *Kikaku to Bashō to* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1996), supplemented by Hisamatsu, Sen’ichi, Ed. *Koten Haibungaku Taikei*, Vol. 10: *Shōmon meika kushū* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1970-73). For Sentokumon poetics, the *Kyōho haikaishū* volume of the *Koten Haibungaku Taikei* series (Hisamatsu Sen’ichi, Ed., Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1973), Suzuki Katsutada, Ishikawa Hachirō and Iwata Hideyuki eds. *Edoza tentori haikaishū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993) and Shiraishi Teizō’s *Edo haikaishi ronkō* (Kyūshū Daigaku

Teitoku's conservative approach to tone, diction and subject matter, and Sōin's Danrin groups, who favored free, imaginative innovation and use of language, often for comic effect, had already turned from fruitful impetus for composition to mere bickering by the 1680s, highlighting the often staid nature of the former school of thought and sometimes frivolous superficiality of the latter. A number of poets of the time struck out in new directions, combining a Teimon sense of elegance and control with a Danrin openness to inspiration and direct expression. The best among these was of course Bashō (1644-1694), who after receiving his initial training from a Teimon poet, moved to Edo and joined a Danrin group—only to withdraw from the influences of city life in 1680 to spawn his own unique style, which emphasized a deep, solitary appreciation of the movements of the world of nature. Bashō's legendary "isolation" was in fact broken by the many disciples who gathered around him, and the many journeys he took to visit friends and patrons in other locales, of which he made records in published poetic diaries. His fame was already great in his lifetime, and after he died on one of his shorter trips in 1694, swelled to unprecedented heights, interesting people of all walks of life in *haikai* composition. In the last years of the century, Bashō's numerous direct disciples, and throngs more who claimed to be, fanned throughout the countryside, offering their personal versions of the master's 'true teaching.' Countryside poets were ultimately unified under the leadership of Kagami Shikō 各務 支考 (1665-1731), who from his base in Mino, traveled and lectured broadly, having profound influence with his promotion of a simplified Bashō style. In the big cities too, traditionally the centers of *haikai* production, the leading Bashō pupils initially held sway: Takarai Kikaku 宝井其角 (1661-1707) and Hattori

shuppankai, 2001). For Ōmura Rantai, Kira Sueo's essays on him and Daimyō *haikai* in *Haisho no Sekai* (Tōkyō: Seishōdō Shoten, 1999), Okamoto's essay "Aichi kyōiku daigaku zō no haikai ichimaizuri: Rantai wo chūshin ni" in Kira Sueo Ed., *Edo Bungaku 25*, and, for additional direct sources, Tenri Toshokan Wataya Bunko's *Haikai saitanshū* (Tokyo: Yagi shoten, 1998).

Ransetsu 服部嵐雪 (1654-1707) in Edo, and Mukai Kyorai 向井去来 (1651-1704) in Kyōto, each with a somewhat different sense of poetics. But all three of these city men died before the first decade of the new century had passed, leaving the door open to yet other influences.

In Edo, where surimono developed as a stylish new form of the New Year presentation from at least the first years of the century, Ransetsu and his disciples were influential, as seen already in the 1702 *Genroku Jūgo Mizunoe Uma Saitan*, but not as powerful or active as Kikaku's group, which had closer connections to the intellectual and social elite of Edo society.⁴²⁶ Both Ransetsu and Kikaku were among the earliest disciples of Bashō, having joined him in their teens, even before his 1680 withdrawal from Edo to Fukagawa, and both were also men from the upper crust of Edo society, Ransetsu of the samurai class and Kikaku a well-educated doctor, who had decided to make *haikai* their private vocation. But similarities stop there. Ransetsu's *haikai* show the influence of Uejima Onitsura 上島鬼貫 (1661-1738, a pupil of Sōin) in stressing the ideal of *makoto*, the simple, sincere statement of feelings, marked by gentleness and a contemplative spirit that tends to slow down experience, in order to examine it in its fine details. Bashō himself once noted an austerity in some of Ransetsu's *haikai* beyond even his own powers of emulation,⁴²⁷ though a more critical disciple described Ransetsu's poetry as "all flowers, no fruit."⁴²⁸ With a character likely in keeping with his poetry, Ransetsu did not gather around him a large or

⁴²⁶ See Virgin (1992), 56. Makoto Ueda notes that Bashō was disappointed with both Ransetsu and Kikaku late in life for their participation as contest judges in Edo *tentori* ("point-taking") *haikai*, which made a game of what Bashō was trying to establish as a serious art form. See Bashō and his Interpreters (Stanford University Press, 1992), 331 and Haruo Shirane, Traces of Dreams, 332-333.

⁴²⁷ In Kyorai's 1692 *Tabine*, this disciple of Bashō notes that the master had once humbly stated: 花やかなる事、其角に及ばず。名月や暈のうゑに松の影からびたる事、嵐雪に及ばず。 ("I cannot reach Kikaku's level of ostentation, nor Ransetsu's 'shadow of a pine, outlined by moonlight on the tatami' type of austerity.")

⁴²⁸ The disciple was the sharply critical Kyoriku, who also described Ransetsu as "soft and weak by nature" in his *Haikai mondō* of 1697.

ostentatious poetry group, but the Setsumon lineage he established did include some of the quality poets later related to the Bashō revival movement, especially Hayano Hajin 早野巴人 (1677?-1742) Buson's teacher, and the prolific Ōshima Ryōta 大島蓼太 (1718-1787), who assumed Ransetsu's poetic name Setchuan (雪中庵). The following are examples of Ransetsu's calm, meditative *haikai* that later generations were to find inspirational:

<i>Hitoha chiru</i>	One leaf falls
<i>Totsu hitoha chiru</i>	Fluttering, another falls
<i>Kaze no ue</i>	Carried on the breeze ⁴²⁹
<i>Kuru mizu no</i>	The water coming
<i>Yuku mizu arau</i>	Washes the water going
<i>Suzumi kana</i>	In the evening cool ⁴³⁰

In sharp contrast with Ransetsu, Kikaku favored showiness and learned allusion in his *haikai*, focusing on the exceptional rather than the everyday, and employing literary associations, especially to classical Chinese themes. Increasingly, especially after the death of Bashō, he favored *haikai* that was rich in layers and complexity, with recondite allusions and sometimes almost cryptic connections between lines that gave his poetry a dark, riddle-like effect. Although these ostentatious aspects of his poetry made it the polar extreme to Bashō's directness and clarity, to the disgust of some fellow members of the Bashōmon,⁴³¹ they endeared Kikaku to Edo intellectuals, who found in his verses an impression of depth and smooth sophistication, qualities referred to as *share* (cool wit, a suave manner suggesting both worldliness and refinement). Kikaku likewise led a social life quite

⁴²⁹ 一葉散る咄一葉散る風の上. This verse was Ransetsu's death poem (乱世歌), as recorded in *Haikai daijiten* (Meiji Shoin, 1961), 690

⁴³⁰ くる水の行く水洗う涼みかな.

⁴³¹ Bashō once had to justify his presence in the school to Kyoriku, saying that Kikaku's poetry shared delicacy with his, though it was different in approach. Kyoriku was Kikaku's most outspoken opponent after Bashō's death, accusing him of having abandoned the master's ideals of *karumi* (lightness) and *ryūkō* (being in the flow of the immediate present). See Keene (1976), 125.

the opposite of Bashō's hermit-like isolation, enjoying the pleasures of Edo's floating world, and hobnobbing with the elite of his day, connections that helped spread the practice of *haikai* among scholars, wealthy merchants and samurai, many of whom became members of his powerful circle.⁴³² Kikaku's poems, like his affiliations, shifted between relatively unelaborated interactions with experience, and highly contrived scenes of the imagination, though in all cases he seemed to prefer the flashy and ostentatiously stylish to the austere. His was a range, for example, that included the following:

<i>Hatsu-yuki ni</i>	Who in the hell
<i>Kono shonben wa</i>	Pissed on
<i>Nani yatsu zo</i>	This year's first snow? ⁴³³

And, a more celebrated verse:

<i>Ka wo yaku ya</i>	Burning mosquitoes--
<i>Hōji ga neya no</i>	In Bao-si's bedchamber
<i>Sasamegoto</i>	Sweet nothings ⁴³⁴

⁴³² Katō Sadahiko, *Haikai no kindaiishi* (Wakagusa Shobo, 1998), 320; also Keene (1976), 126

⁴³³ はつ雪に此小便は何奴ツぞ, from *Gogenshū*, printed in 1747, compiled in *Takarai Kikaku zenshū* v.1 (Tokyo: Benseisha, 1994), 528. The immediate emotional reaction in this poem, though it does contain an affected/socialized layer of mock pride in one's own sensitivity, contrasts with the use of a somewhat similar "mock disdain" motif in a later Kikaku poem, which quotes a Po Chu'i verse in its headnote to provide its meaning: *Waga yakko/rakka ni asane/yurushikeri* ("My servant boy/Taking a morning sleep in the falling blossoms/I've forgiven him"). On one level, the boy is forgiven for having insensitively slept through the blossom storm, on another because, although he should have been working, or at least viewing, he makes a beautiful scene under the tree, and on a third level, in connection with Po Chu'i, because, having slept, he has not swept away the fallen flowers, which the speaker hates to see go. This sort of complexity appealed to Kikaku's followers.

⁴³⁴ 蚊をやくや褒じが閨の私語, from *Minashigurishū*, 1684, compiled in *Takarai Kikaku zenshū* v. 1 (Tokyo: Benseisha, 1994), 17. The poem moves associatively from the mundane act of lighting incense to chase away mosquitoes, typically done at bedtime, to a literary allusion to the story of the femme fatale, imperial consort Baosi (in some versions, a nine-tailed fox in disguise), whose continual despondency led Emperor You of the Chou Dynasty (reigned 781-771 BCE) to light the emergency signal fires and summon his vassals in the middle of the night, all in order to cheer her spirits. The romantic scene that likely followed leads back to a suggestion of the speaker's own immediate present that summoned the allusion, sharing a bed with a lover (likely a courtesan, who thereby takes on Baosi's seductive and enticingly destructive feminine power) on a hot summer night. This sort of *ga-zoku* clash, or *mitate* (seeing a classical model in the contingent present) can be seen as the aesthetic root of privately made *egoyomi* and *surimono*, an approach that will be transferred from poetry to image by *haikai* poet and *ukiyo-e* printmaker Okumura Masanobu (1686-1764).

Although he has on the one hand been accused of a lack of emotional commitment, treating *haikai* merely as an intellectual plaything, Kikaku has also been widely recognized as Bashō's most brilliant pupil. His consciously contrived construction of poetry, however, though not hard to superficially emulate, was difficult to master, as the failure of many of the arcane, impenetrable verses of his students makes clear.

But the disciples of Bashō were far from the only poetic forces in Edo at the turn of the eighteenth century. Out of the Edo Danrin movement had emerged a number of poetic groups, the largest and most influential of which was the Sentokumon 沾徳門, established by Mizuma Sentoku 水間沾徳 (1662-1726), a pupil of Sawa Rosen 沢露川 (1655-1733), with whom Bashō had associated in his early days as a Danrin poet. Sentoku and Kikaku were close compatriots in the world of Edo nightlife, and seem to have exerted mutual influence on one another.⁴³⁵ Far more than Kikaku, whose poetry was tempered by the restraining power of Bashō while that master was alive, Sentoku and his students have been accused of approaching *haikai* as pure entertainment, creating verses that emphasized both *share* 洒落 (Kikaku-like sophistication) and *fūryū* 風流 (cutting-edge contemporariness) rejecting outright both the elitist propriety of Teitoku and the rough simplicity of Bashō. Their poetry, instead, for the most part aimed at a stylish cleverness, with an urban consciousness that at times mocked its own distance from nature, as in the dry wit of this 7-7 link by Sentoku:

<i>Yuri ya kore ka to</i> <i>Kao wo mite oru</i>	Ah, a lilly! This is it, I think Gazing into its face and snapping it off. ⁴³⁶
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⁴³⁵ On the relationship of Sentoku and Kikaku, see Katō Sadahiko, *Haikai no kindaishi* (Wakagusa shobo, 1998), 322 and Virgin (1992), 54.

⁴³⁶ 百合哉是かと顔を見て折る, from the collection *Kinryūzan* of 1712, compiled in Hisamatsu Sen'ichi Ed., *Koten haibungaku taikēi*, Volume 11: *Kyōho haikaishū* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1973), 16.

Influenced by Kikaku and his disciples, the Sentokumon also explored contrived, eccentric combinations of ideas, but the resolution in their poetry was most often one intended to produce laughter or at least a wry smile at its bizarreness, not an atmosphere of classicism or refinement:

<i>Hatsu yuki ya</i>	First snow--
<i>Ashiba no ue no</i>	On the tips of the rushes
<i>Manako tama</i>	Eyeballs ⁴³⁷

Moreover, if Kikaku has been accused of wanting in seriousness, this quality in the Sentokumon social world was not only deemed unimportant, it was anathema, kryptonite to the cool, free-floating impression of sophisticated play (the so-called *ukiyo* 浮世 style) their verses set up. Sentoku's leading disciple, Kishi Senshū 岸沾州 (1670-1739), for example, is said to have prided himself on his ability to transform any poet's *maeku* (前句・first verse) into a racy, erotic allusion with his appended *tsukeku* (付け句・second verse).⁴³⁸ Later, when he succeeded Sentoku to leadership of the school, he made "human affairs" (人事) the primary focus of Sentokumon poetry, appealing directly to the sensibilities of the denizens of the urban pleasure quarters. And like his master, one of the few poets to openly denigrate Bashō, calling his poems "thin," Senshū found his inspiration in the intricate, layered style of Kikaku, promoting so-called "*hiyu*" (比喩・metaphorical) *haikai*. Metaphor, for Senshū and his compatriots, however, often meant simply a way of referring to human sexuality while speaking of plants and animals, as in the opening verses of his one-man *kasen* in *Edo ikada* 江戸筏 (1716), where the description of a falcon hunt sets up a series of thinly veiled, graphic references to the various practices of homosexuality (男色).⁴³⁹

⁴³⁷ 初雪や葦葉の上の眼玉, compiled in *ibid.*

⁴³⁸ See Keene (1976), 339.

⁴³⁹ See *Edoza tentori haikaishū* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1993), 160. For example: 朝鷹やうき世が家の御若衆 ("The morning hawk / with a young boy / from a floating world house"), followed by: 股つくつくと萩の本あら ("Thrusting again and again at its loins [ostensibly those of an animal] the hawk

In a number of his surviving poems, moreover, he comes close to *senryū*, as in this proverb-like example, reminiscent of the modern joke about the fool who carries a car door through the desert so he can roll down the window when it gets hot:

<i>Eizan no</i>	Raising the ridgepole
<i>Munagi wo agete</i>	of Eizan
<i>Shita suzumi</i>	To cool off in its shade ⁴⁴⁰

At their best, the Sentokumon were an ingenious incarnation of early Danrin inspiration, shot through with some of Kikaku's complexity and learned sophistication; at their worst they varied between utter incomprehensibility in dense, strained metaphors and flippish immaturity in sexual obsession, leading one major critic to label them "smart-alecky."⁴⁴¹

It should come as no shock, considering the connections between their masters and poetic ideals, that after the death of Kikaku in 1707, his pupils aligned themselves with the poets who clustered around Sentoku, despite his outright rejection of Bashō. Nor should it be a surprise to learn that these poets, with their taste for the fashionable and connections in high places, were the commissioners of many early surimono. Leading Kikaku pupils like Kuwaoka Teisa 桑岡貞佐 (1672-1734), Matsuki Tantan 松木淡々 (1674-1761), Tokura Hakuun 戸倉白雲 (?-1730) and Ogawa Shūshiki 小川秋色 (1669-1725) joined forces with Sentoku, Senshū and other Sentokumon poets

has caught] / down in the bush clover [a sensual pun for the calf of the leg"], then: 風も春太髻に糊をして ("This wind too is springlike / Some paste applied / to the thick topknot of his hair").

⁴⁴⁰ 叡山の棟木をあげて下沈み. Hisamatsu, Ed. (1973), v. 11, 47. Another proverb/*senryū*-like verse by Sentoku has "A good doctor / doesn't need to / sweeten the medicine." Ibid, 29.

⁴⁴¹ The English label comes from Keene, 338, but *Haikai daijiten* (Meiji shoin, 1961), 663 likewise denigrates Sentokumon poetics, noting that a verse like "The remains of my chancre/The peak of Mt. Fuji" received high marks in *hiyu*-style *tentori haikai*. Some scholars, however, have marveled at the dismissal of Sentoku and Senshū in modern times, considering how highly influential they were in their day. Sentoku, in particular, was counted as one of the five or ten great masters of *haikai* in a number of late eighteenth century books, and even appeared in the *Dai-jinmei jiten* as late as 1938. See Shiraishi Teizō, *Edo haikaishi ronkō* (Kyūshū Daigaku shuppankai, 2001) 139 for fuller details of Sentoku's posthumous reception. Senshū also has his ardent defenders, such as Suzuki Katsutada, who asserts: "that such a *haikai* master should be so neglected in later times is a rare thing" (Quoted from *ibid*, 229).

such as Horiuchi Senkaku 堀内仙鶴 (1675-1748) and Washida Seiga 鷲田青峨 (?-1730) on at least 13 of the earliest 15 surimono in Rantai's collection,⁴⁴² and numerous others thereafter. At the head of the pack were Senshū and Teisa, each of whom make over twenty appearances on the 75 pre-1736 surimono in the Aichi Kyōiku Daigaku collection, though each of the poets mentioned above also have at least five contributions among this number. Curiously, so too does the Setsumon (雪門) poet Hyakuri, who, alternating with his fellow disciple Hyōka, appears to have been invited to join the Sentoku-Kikakumon festivities on a number of occasions—though these Setsumon poets are typically represented only with single verses in less than prominent positions, while Senshū, Teisa and even their lesser fellow disciples have multiple verses on the very same prints.⁴⁴³ These facts suggest that there were yet close interactions between the pupils of Bashō's two leading Edo disciples—and indeed, Hayano Hajin 早野巴人 (1678-1742), who appears to an equally limited extent on a few early surimono, was a poet connected to both the Ransetsu and Kikaku circles. The participation in these prints thus gives an impression of inclusiveness and mutual cooperation among Edo poetry groups, but the numbers of poets and poems clearly implies a power relationship, representing the Setsumon as only a minor part of Edo poetic activities. It seems reasonable to conclude that although the Setsumon had “commissioning power” while Ransetsu was alive, the allied Sentoku-Kikaku groups were in control of the proceedings on most extant early surimono.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴² One of the exceptions, moreover, uses poetic aliases, and most likely also relates to Sentokumon poetics. We have seen this print already (Kōka's Plum and Lottery Prizes of 1710) and will examine it in detail shortly. These 15 surimono all date to the Hōei and Shōtoku Periods, 1716 or before.

⁴⁴³ See, for example, Okamoto Masaru, “Aichi Kyōiku Daigaku-zo” nos. 1, 5, 6 and 21, all with single verses by Hyakuri or Hyōka (who never appear together) and multiple by Senshū and/or Teisa. No.39 does have two verses by Hyakuri, though each of the seven poets on this print have two verses. No.43 also has two, but as part of a *mitsumono*, necessitating his appearance in two places. Particularly notable are no.1 and 6, in which Hyakuri and Hyōka appear with but one verse in sets of over thirty, while even relatively minor Sentoku-Kikaku pupils are represented with multiple examples.

⁴⁴⁴ Only one early surimono in Rantai's collection was commissioned by the Setsumon, a 1726 work led by Hyakuri, with Kinfū and Hakuun (Kikaku-za poets).

A presentation piece for the “First Horse” day of the second month of 1708 (Figure 17), for example, the earliest surimono in the Aichi Kyōiku Daigaku collection, reads like a “who’s who” of most of the leading commissioners and contributors to the surimono Rantai was to receive for the next three decades. As one of the initial extant statements in the genre, it is almost as though these poets had come together for the sole purpose of announcing their intent to explore this new form, for of the 76 pre-1736 surimono I have been able to examine, 49 of these contain the names of one or more of these poets, in various combinations and permutations. Specifically, of the 24 poets participating in “First Horse,” most from Kikaku-Sentoku lineages, four were never heard from in extant surimono again, another five appear on just two or three more surimono, nine on an additional four or five pieces, and the remaining six poets on eight or more surimono each.⁴⁴⁵ Moreover, as one might expect from such numbers, these poets did not often appear in isolation from their fellows: of the 49 pieces on which at least one of these poets participated, 20 include three or more of their names, another 12 at least two, while of the 17 “solo” appearances, 11 are by just three men, leaders of their own poetry circles.⁴⁴⁶ These facts suggest that the creation of surimono was from the beginning of the eighteenth century a group-based phenomenon, involving disciples, friends and allied poets, and that the ties within these groups were strong and enduring, as were their interests in making surimono. Additionally, almost half of the 27 exceptions in Rantai’s collection date after 1730, with 13 of the 17 post-1730 prints lacking “First Horse” poets. If we consider only the 59 prints dated before that time or undated but

⁴⁴⁵ See Appendix I for brief biographies of these poets and other important figures in early surimono.

⁴⁴⁶ These were Tantan (5), Teisa and Sanseki (3 each). The Sanseki “solos” will need to be reconsidered shortly, however, for in two of them he appears with Rantai and/or Rantai’s close compatriots, men who did not appear on the 1708 “First Horse” but were nonetheless involved with the Sentoku and Kikaku groups. Sanseki had early and close ties with Rantai, to be discussed in the next paragraph.

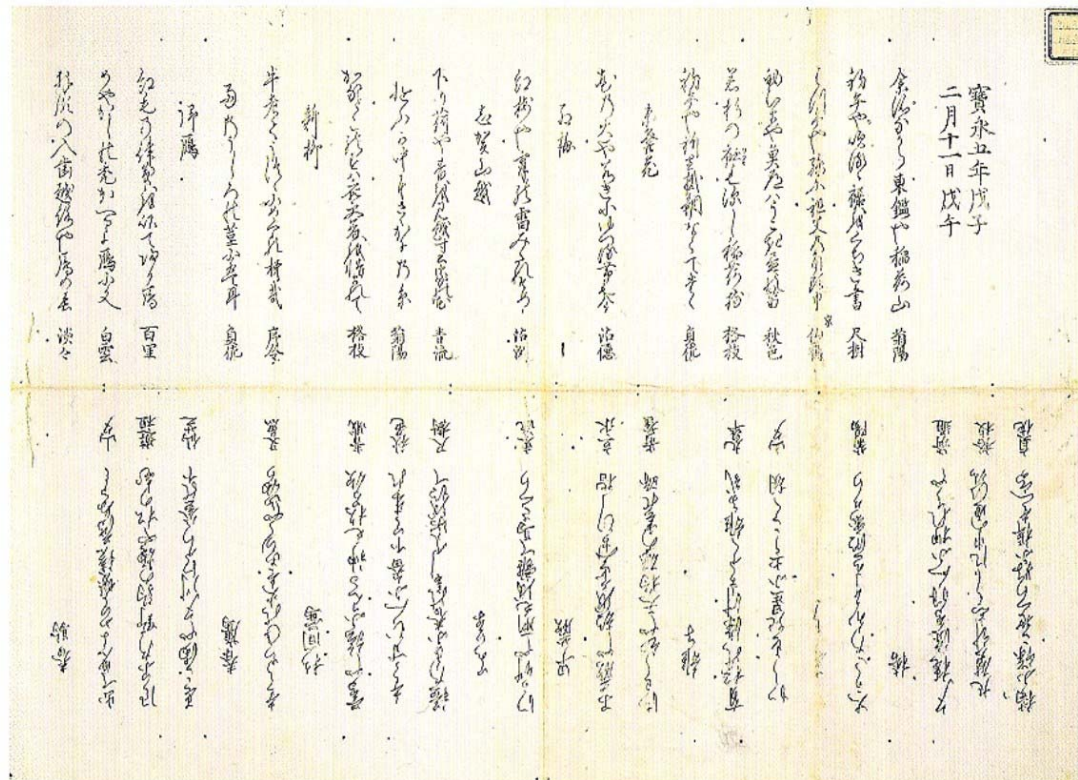


Figure 17: *Hōei gonen tsuchinoe ne nigatsu nijūichinichi tsuchinoe uma* (宝永五年戊子 二月二十一日戌馬). An *ōbōshozenshiban* surimono in celebration of the “First Horse” (初午) Festival of 1708, commissioned by Kuwaoka Teisa. Aichi University of Education.

attributed to the Kyōhō 享保 Period (1716-1736), the numbers are even more startling: 45 of these 59 surimono include at least one of these poets, and 19 three or more of them. Whether this suggests that it was Rantai's or the surimono world that gradually expanded after 1730 is an issue I will return to later, but as far as extant early surimono are concerned, the majority clearly derive from a core group of poets, most of whom participated in the first surimono Rantai seems ever to have received, and who continued to issue surimono together regularly, with only some minor coming and going, for the next two decades.

The 1708 "First Horse" is not a particularly exciting work in terms of structure, but as it not only represents many of the poets in the Rantai collection, but is also a fairly typical work in layout and format for early surimono, it is worthwhile sampling. The print takes the standard form of a folded *renga kaishi*, with each panel laid out exactly as any page in a *haikai* anthology or *saitanchō* of the era, but in a vastly different size, some 16 by 21 inches, which asserts it as an important piece. The *hashi-tsukuri* has the usual year date, brushed in bolder calligraphy than the texts, followed by a particular date, the eleventh day in the second month. That this day is *hatsu-uma*, an annual festival at Inari Shrines, is clear in the six opening poems and their bright, celebratory tone, such as:

<i>Hatsu-uma ya</i>	First Day of the Horse--
<i>Mago ni ojii no</i>	On grandson, the old man's
<i>Kakuzukin</i>	Horned hood.
--Kyō-Senkaku (Senkaku of Kyōto) ⁴⁴⁷	

After this opening section, the work is a curious mish-mash of twelve poetic subjects, most of them suitably related to spring, but a few having little direct connection to this time of year at all. Subjects include expected springtime themes like *Shinryū* (新柳・"New Willows"), *Harugoma* (春駒・"Spring Colts") and

⁴⁴⁷ はつ午や孫に叔父の角頭巾. The hood has points that stick up like horse ears.

Sugima uguisu (杉間鶯・“The Warbler in the Cedars”), but also *Harudaka* (春鷹・“Spring Falcons”), though falcons are typically a topic for winter poetry, *Tsubaki* (椿・“Camellia”), a winter flower, and *Shiga no Yamagoe* (滋賀の山越え・“Crossing the Shiga Mountains”). Most of the poems are individual *hokku*, but here and there, without warning, are links, such as this on *Kigisu* (雉子・“The Pheasant”):

<i>Arimatsu no</i>	Like Arimatsu’s
<i>Someshiru yokute</i>	Fine dyed-stuffs
<i>Kigisu kana</i>	The pheasant! ⁴⁴⁸
--Kyūkō	

<i>Karasukiboshi ni</i>	With the three stars in Orion aligned
<i>Tsuchi ugoku asa</i>	This is a morning for moving earth ⁴⁴⁹
--Sanseki	

Much like the rapidly changing, sometimes startling subjects, there are sudden shifts within the tone of the verses as well. Although many are bright, others have a darker, mysterious flavor, somewhat out of keeping with the rest:

<i>Sawarabi ya</i>	Early bracken--
<i>Tengu tōge no</i>	At the <i>tengu</i> ’s mountain pass
<i>Kumo no ato</i>	The remnants of clouds ⁴⁵⁰
--Hojaku	

In sum, as one might expect from a piece with so many poets and poems, the 1708 “First Horse” shows little coherence or consistency in theme or mood. There is no central focus, no organizing idea holding the piece together. Rather, it is in fact exactly like a page from an anthology of this period writ large, with some interesting poems, but no internal connections or reasons why they should be beside one another.

⁴⁴⁸ 有松の染汁よくて雉哉. Arimatsu was a place in Aichi, near Narumi, famous for its dyed goods, which are here compared to the naturally rich plumage of the pheasant. There is almost certainly a reference to human activities being made here and in the following link, through the stand-ins of *hiyu* (metaphorical) *haikai*.

⁴⁴⁹ からすき星に土うこく朝. *Karasukiboshi* refers to the alignment of three stars at the center of Orion. These are so named after the shape of the *karasuki*, a plow with three points on top, thus leading to the “moving of the earth.” The playful link here seems to be in the embedded pun *karasu* (crow) which connects thematically with the pheasant in the previous.

⁴⁵⁰ さわらひや天狗峠の雲の跡.

In this sense, the work, though one of the oldest surimono, does not stand out as particularly special. Ultimately, it fails to take full advantage of the possibilities of the new format it has assumed, neither a grand enough statement for its large paper nor utilizing the potential for unified message provided by the single surface. Rather, if the work spilled over onto the back or shrank down to become a page in an anthology, we would hardly notice a change in its nature. Such works do not function well as memorable or striking gifts.

Although Rantai and his associates Kitamura Wafū 北村和風 (?-1737, Chōwa Group) and Jokō 如蒿 (dates unknown) did not appear on the 1708 “First Horse,” and were not officially part of the main Sentoku-Kikaku lineages, these three men mingled closely with these poets during Rantai’s periods of alternate residence in Edo, and collectively joined them on over a dozen surimono. Rantai’s 1710 “Treasure Ship,” for example, includes both of these associates, plus Sentoku, Shūshiki and Higuchi Sanseki 樋口山夕 (dates unknown, active late 1690s-1730s),⁴⁵¹ who all three appeared on “First Horse.” Sanseki in particular seems to have had deep ties with Rantai, performing with him on two 1706 *tentori haikai kaishi* also in the Aichi Kyōiku Daigaku collection, and may have been responsible for introducing him to Senshū and Sentoku, with whom Sanseki subsequently shared duties in assigning points at *tentori* sessions held at Rantai’s Edo residence.⁴⁵² Rantai appears with his three teachers, plus Teisa, Seiga and Jokō, in a 1709 *saitanchō*, the first extant published work to carry their names together.⁴⁵³ Of the 15 surimono of which Rantai

⁴⁵¹ Dates unknown. The son of Sanseki I, said to be of the lineage of Takashima Genrei (?-1689), a Teitoku poet who moved in Edo, though also possibly of the Ishida Mitoku line.

⁴⁵² Okamoto, Masaru, *Aichi Kyōiku Daigakuzō no haikai ichimaizuri*, Part III: “Rantai kankei no tentori,” nos. 9-14, 18-19, 21 and 23-31 in Kira, Ed., (2002). From 1706-1708, Sanseki served as Rantai’s tentori master ten times, Senshū three and Sentoku five times. Ryuei, another of the “First Horse” poets, also served as master twice, and Murin, who had been with Rantai since his first tentori session, once. Sanseki and Murin also joined as participants in five sessions, though, as in surimono, they almost never overlapped (nos. 6, 7, 11, 15 and 27 for Sanseki; nos. 2-4, 7, 14 for Murin).

⁴⁵³ *Tenri Tōshokan Wataya Bunko: Haisho shūsei* 29, *haikai saitanshū, san* (Yagi shoten, 1995), 385-397

was subsequently a part,⁴⁵⁴ Wafū and Jokō appear with him on seven, while Sanseki joins him on eight and Teisa on six.⁴⁵⁵ There are also four surimono in which Rantai appears with Shimura Murin 志村無倫 (1655-1723), a pupil of Kitamura Kigin 北村季吟 (1625-1705),⁴⁵⁶ who practiced *tentori haikai* with Rantai from 1703. These pieces are notable in that they do not typically include any of the “First Horse” poets—though Sentoku does have a single poem on one—thus allowing us a glimpse not only of Rantai’s multiple affiliations, but also of the production of surimono in connection with other groups. Four other Rantai surimono are also notable in this regard: three that he produced with Uemura Shin’an (1664-1725), a Kyōto poet of the Shintoku School, two of which involved only Teisa of the core group poets; and most importantly, his final extant surimono of 1735, in which he appears alongside three of the five breakaway poets who had recently rejected the contrived poetics of the Sentokumon to form the influential Goshikizumi (五色墨・”Five Colors of Ink”) group: Ōba Shiseki 大場咫尺 (1677-1759), Nakagawa Sōzui 中川宗瑞 (1685-1744), and Sakuma Chōsui 佐久間長水 (1585-1751).⁴⁵⁷ Although most of Rantai’s surimono appearances are with Kikaku-za and Sentoku-za poets, and the vast majority of pieces in his collection received from poets affiliated with these schools, Rantai yet remained a free agent in the *haikai* world, associating with not only those unaffiliated with, but ultimately even those openly antagonistic to the Sentoku-za.

⁴⁵⁴ It is curious that Kira, and Okamoto following him, note only thirteen surimono by Rantai. Kira overlooks nos. 10 and 51 in Okamoto’s catalogue of the Rantai collection, while Okamoto himself for some reason fails to take note of nos. 16 and 20 in his list, prints Rantai made with the Murin group in 1717 and 1718.

⁴⁵⁵ Senshū and Sentoku, interestingly, only appear on two of Rantai’s surimono each, though their pupils often join. For Senshū, one of the most prolific contributors, this is a surprisingly small number. I believe we must see Rantai as something of a free agent in *haikai* circles, rather than committed to any one particular group. To some extent this calls into question the idea that practitioners left their worldly status at the door when they entered *haikai* circles, as Rantai’s position allowed him this freedom, his wealth and power making him the courted object of several *haikai* circles, rather than their subservient disciple.

⁴⁵⁶ Originally a Teitoku pupil, Kigin (1624-1705) is best known today as Bashō’s first teacher.

⁴⁵⁷ Kira (1999) transliterates this surimono and gives biographies of its poets, 235-6.

In some respects, these exceptions to the Sentoku-Kikaku domination of the surimono in Rantai's collection are more interesting than the mainstream works. For although the latter help us to see the close and constant interactions between the members of leading poetry groups in creating surimono in the early eighteenth century, the former suggest something of the broader outlines of surimono practice. Specifically, these exceptions do not at all show the same patterns of tight group inclusiveness we see on other surimono, with little repetition of names, no alliances of disciples who join one another over and over again in different combinations to make surimono—and thus no alternate group to challenge the leading place of the Sentoku-Kikaku alliance, though whether this was actually in overall surimono practice or only in Rantai's attention is difficult to determine. Disregarding some late works on which new names represent only generational change within the main groups,⁴⁵⁸ this unity in the majority and variety among the exceptions suggests two possibilities: either that Rantai only received, or kept, a few such surimono by other groups as samples, meaning that these are but the tip of the iceberg of surimono practice outside the leading Sentoku-Kikaku groups, or that these pieces were in actuality isolated cases, experiments in the surimono genre that were not repeated. In fact, as these Kikaku-Sentoku exceptions are truly various, each possibility seems to hold for individual cases. It pays then to give close attention both to the major works made by that cohesive, core group of poets involved in the production of early surimono, and to some of those minority voices, suggesting both the mainstream influence and alternate pull on Rantai's sensibilities, as well as some of the variety of aesthetics in the eighteenth century *haikai* world.

⁴⁵⁸ The nature of these works as such is made obvious by poets utilizing Sentoku's "Sen" (沾) or Teisa's "Tei" (貞).

The Aesthetics of Early Surimono: Images and Their Effects

Of the many possible ways to approach early *haikai* surimono—by their makers, layouts, poetry, places and patterns of production—I will from this point focus on the various aesthetic approaches represented by particular extant works, as a means of touching on all of these diverse topics while also introducing some of the highlights of the Rantai collection. For my goal here is not only descriptive, to identify the who, what, where and when of early surimono, but also in terms of the development of the genre, to single out the most successful works, that were to influence later, more complex uses of the form. Moreover, the pattern of development in early surimono is not smooth and continuous, as would favor a chronological approach, but uneven and choppy, with progressive experiments scattered among standard productions, supporting a work-centered approach. Specifically, my interest here is in exploring how surimono developed from mere ‘overblown anthology pages,’ such as the 1708 “First Horse,” into a form more suited to the grandeur of its format, taking fuller advantage of the possibilities offered by the single sheet gift print. Or, to phrase the matter more in the historical terms of surimono’s own development, how this genre overcame the influence of *saitanchō*-style content, with which it was born, to grow into the new *kaishi*-style format, which held the key to opening up its vastly different uses in the future. Finally, this transformation in early surimono can also be described in relation to the ideals of the *haikai* poetry that filled its surfaces: bringing in *shukō* 趣向, or witty, structural devices, to provide a unified, playful form to the surimono as a whole.

Growing into the *kaishi* format meant becoming more than a large page of poetry, stripped from an anthology and expanded in size. It implied developing internal coherence and a sense of completeness as a work unto itself, a closed structure that would give poetry an organized place within it, while also delineating the

boundaries of the work.⁴⁵⁹ At the lowest level, this function was performed by the *dai*, or subject markers, borrowed from anthologies such as the *Kokin wakashū* that grouped poetry thematically in this manner. But *dai* alone, although cohesive as individual units, do not typically create a sense of closure; they are a linear, open-ended structure, preparing the reader for the poems that follow, but not for the next *dai*, which may follow one another in an arbitrary, unpredictable fashion that provides no location or sense of ultimate closure for the reader.⁴⁶⁰ One of the great, early leaps in surimono, therefore, was the modeling of works after another prototype than the anthology page, taking the structure of concert programs or calendars, for example, to provide a sense of order, completeness and finality. But the creative uses of alternate prototypes, interesting though they may be, were necessarily limited by the conventional, social uses of paper. On the other hand, illustration, which could be utilized to thematically orient a print and the poetry inscribed upon it, was virtually limitless in subject and style. It is illustration, I intend to demonstrate here, and particularly illustration that serves as more than just a pictorial *dai*, but interacts meaningfully with and structures the organization of the poetry, that allows surimono to develop into something more than just giant *saitanchō*.

We can see the importance of illustration already in the first extant works that contain it, particularly Rantai's 1710 "Treasure Ship"—which does indeed carry a load of benefits for the future development of the surimono form. Discussion of this work also provides a good opportunity to introduce Rantai as a historical figure.

⁴⁵⁹ My stress on the unity of the work here is not a presumptuous projection of Aristotelian standards onto the Japanese cultural context, but rather part of an examination of what makes a memorable, directed poetic presentation. A work without structure, with scattered content, may contain many fine individual poems, but does not create a directed impression on the mind of the recipient, nor is it particularly suited to the occasion of the gift. A playfully structured work, by contrast, can refer to the auspicious seasonal occasion with its wit and celebratory material, through a schedule of noh chants, a calendar or a pictorial charm, and thus create a strong impression.

⁴⁶⁰ There are exceptions, however, such as the seasons, stages of life or hours of the day, where *dai* are in a closed-ended sequence, the structure of which is previously established outside of the anthology.

Ōmura Rantai was born as Ōmura Sumitsune, the fourth son of the fourth Feudal Lord of Hizen (contemporary Nagasaki), Ōmura Suminaga, in 1670. At age 41, he was adopted into the family of his elder brother, the fifth Lord of Hizen, and thus aligned to succeed as the sixth Lord shortly thereafter, holding this post from 1712 to 1727. But for at least a decade before assuming political leadership, Rantai's off-duty hours in Edo had been given to the practice of *haikai* poetry. Rantai was not alone among his elite class in this predilection, in spite of the fact that *haikai* was largely a plebian art; at least 28 other *daimyō* at various times and places also became passionate about *haikai*, including two who, like Rantai, were actively involved in the creation of surimono.⁴⁶¹ Rantai's initiation into the Edo *haikai* scene seems to have occurred with *tentori*⁴⁶² (点取り • “point taking”) sessions at his Edo residence in 1703; he demonstrated the freedom of his position in the poetic world by taking his poetic name from the title of his family mansion, the Rantaikan, rather than from any master. But through the various masters summoned to serve as judges and sometimes contestants at these *tentori* sessions, Rantai grew acquainted with most of the leading figures in Edo *haikai*, recording these composition matches on *kaishi*, which were preserved along with the surimono in his collection. In his most active period, he seems to have hosted almost 40 of these sessions per year. Rantai was thus a major benefactor of Edo *haikai* masters, who accordingly kept themselves in his regard, partly by sending him their own groups' surimono on a fairly regular basis, while joining Rantai too on

⁴⁶¹ See *Haibungaku daijiten*, (Kadokawa shoten, 1995), 524. The other surimono-designing *daimyō* were Yanagisawa Nobutoki (Beiō) and Sanada Kikutsura. See also Kira, “Haikai ichimaizuri to daimyōtachi,” in Asano (1997), 12-18, and “Daimyōtachi no haikai” in Shiraishi (2001), 261.

⁴⁶² *Tentori haikai* was a system of assigning points to verses—either individual *hokku*, or linked verses in a *kasen* or *hyakuin*—according to their quality. Point giving was based on Matsunaga Teitoku's attempt to objectify criticism for his students with *hiten* (comparison marks) but by the late seventeenth century had developed into a social game, in which each of the poets became competitors for honors. Compositions were judged individually by a *tenja* (point assigning *haikai* master) and the points and verses recorded, with an overall winner and loser singled out at the end of a session by total numbers. Although the system was quite corrupt, with points assigned by factors other than aesthetic quality (such as friendship and patronage), the game seemed irresistible to *haikai* poets, especially in the major cities.

many of the surimono he commissioned. Rantai also published two *haikai* books in *fukurotoji* (袋綴) format, *Tagasode* (誰袖・“Whose Sleeve?”) in 1711 and *Yozakura* (夜桜・“Night Cherries”) in 1722, including verses these masters had composed with him, in the latter case at a flower viewing party he had hosted. Like many of his surimono, these were gorgeously printed works, utilizing the skills of the best artisans available. The blocks for both books were prepared by master carver Yoshida Uhaku 吉田宇白 (dates unknown, active 1710s-1730s), whose name also appears on 14 surimono in the Rantai Collection, including once as a poet; *Tagasode* likewise included a frontispiece illustration of a plum tree by Hanabusa Itchō 英一蝶 (1652-1724), the great independent painter and *haikai* poet, who had recently returned to Edo after a 12 year exile.⁴⁶³ These connections are suggestive of the type of talent Rantai could summon for creating his surimono.

Nevertheless, the ratio of text to illustrated pages in Rantai books, and of plain to illustrated or decorative surimono in his collection, reveals that the greater concentration in these works went to the poetry, and the fine calligraphy and paper on which it was printed. In fact, although Rantai was doubtless more capable of going to the extra trouble and expense⁴⁶⁴ to make his surimono stand out visually, he did not seem to do so much more than any other major poet: the 15 surimono on which he

⁴⁶³ Itchō, who seems to have spent much of his life getting kicked out by institutions (first the priesthood, then the Kanō School and finally the Tokugawa Shogunate), was exiled for having painted the Shogun's favorite concubine as an *asobi* (a prostitute who plied her trade on a boat), an early example of satirical *mitate* in painting. An unaffiliated painter, Itchō survived mostly on commissions from merchants. As a *haikai* poet, he studied with Bashō, and many of his lively, lighthearted works have a *haikai* flavor.

⁴⁶⁴ By trouble and expense I mean the hiring of an artist to produce an image, the color printing of that image, or the addition of precious metals, but *not* the carving of a key-block with an image itself. In fact, a surimono with illustration was *not necessarily* more expensive to prepare than one without, assuming that the commissioner or a friend (not a hired artist) created the image, and that it was carved on the same block as the text (not color printed). The carving of a simple image was no more difficult than the carving of text—quite to the contrary, its broad outlines could be easier to reproduce. Thus the idea that illustrated surimono were more difficult to produce and thus prohibitively expensive is a fallacy in some studies of early surimono—in fact an anachronistic projection of modern book production. Illustrated surimono could certainly be very rich and expensive, with multiple-block color printing, but it was always possible to illustrate a work on the key-block without any added expense.

appears include three illustrated works and one decorated with gold and silver flecks.⁴⁶⁵ This 20% rate of illustration matches exactly the average in his collection as whole, in which 15 surimono are illustrated with images, while another three utilize colored or gilt paper, leaving an overwhelming 57 as text-only on plain, albeit rich, paper. Among even these latter, of course, are many interesting variations: poetic texts arranged suitably around a *noh* program, or to reveal the large and small months for the coming calendar year, with ruled lines or frames around the poetry, and including *mitsumono* and *hokku* in unique arrangements, with variously inscribed titles. *Saitan* (New Year) surimono overwhelmingly predominate, though there are works for other seasonal occasions, particularly *hatsuuma* and *jōshi*,⁴⁶⁶ as well as for commemorating poets' birthdays and visits, and even for announcing parties and events—but no matter what their particular occasion all 75 surimono contain *haikai* poetry. These facts suggest, once again, that surimono began as woodblock printed presentation sheets for poetry, and only developed close ties with image-making later. It also suggests, as we will see, that text-image interplay—the lively interweaving and leaps of association between poem and picture, as between lines in *haikai* linked verse—was not an especially important area of exploration in early surimono, as it was for surimono in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Rather, even when these early surimono were illustrated, the images were largely decorative, with standard seasonal imagery that captured something of the spirit of the occasion, but

⁴⁶⁵ Interestingly, both Senshū and Sanseki appear in connection with illustrated surimono more often than Rantai, six and seven times each. Wafū and Jokō also join in five illustrated surimono. The latter, in particular, seems to have been an avid and inventive commissioner of surimono, and some distinction does need to be made between surimono on which a poet appears and surimono which a poet commissioned himself. Still, of the four surimono on which Rantai appears in the initial position, generally indicative of the commissioner in early *haikai* works, only one is illustrated. Poetry seems to have been of greater concern than decoration.

⁴⁶⁶ *Hatsuuma* (初午) was the first horse day of the second month, a time of festival celebration at Inari shrines. *Jōshi* (上巳) was a festival held on the first snake day of the third month, now celebrated on March 3 as *Hinagata*, popularly known as “Doll’s Day” or “Girl’s Day.”

purposely did not interfere with the centrality of the poetry. Nonetheless, the very immediacy of the visual image often made it into a unifying, organizing theme, so that even generic, seasonal pictures could play a leading role in the imaginative construction of a piece. In exploring the development of surimono, we will see that it is mainly the addition of the image, and the growing complexity of that image's relationship with the poetic component, that leads the surimono form through its various stages of growth.

Turning back to Rantai's 1710 "Treasure Ship" (宝船), which we have briefly examined in Chapter Two, we can recognize now not only many of the poets who worked with Rantai on this piece, but also the relation of this work to their playful sense of poetic aesthetics. The witty device (趣向), or core idea of this piece derives from the custom of placing a picture of the treasure ship beneath one's pillow on the first night of the year to insure good-auguring dreams. The treasure ship is the vehicle of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune, who ride into one's dreaming mind in this manner, delivering their positive attributes as treasures for the New Year. Rantai's preface playfully reminds the reader of this belief:

In the era of Hōei⁴⁶⁷, pillows should be everywhere, so with the ease of Mt. Taishan,⁴⁶⁸ lay yourself down [and place one of these beneath.] You'll hear a faint sound from the friendly prow as the seven fortunes come to attend, and then all your fairyland dreams will come true, spreading your face in a wide spring smile.

蓬瀛いづれの所に有べく枕を泰山のやすきにをき七福
の来臨から艫の音もゆたかに仙境の夢はまさしく春の
笑がほにうつる

⁴⁶⁷ Hōei (宝永) was the era name, meaning literally "treasure eternal." Rantai here substitutes the characters 蓬瀛, with the "hō" of Mt. Hōrai, place of the immortals, and "ei" (*kun* reading *umi*) meaning ocean.

⁴⁶⁸ Mt. Taishan, a Chinese mountain, spelled with the character for "ease." Rantai suggests an overlay of geography onto personal space, where the high wooden pillow itself becomes Mt. Taishan, the "mountain of ease."

Mention of the sound of the treasure ship would direct viewers' attention, if they had not seen them already, to the image and poem on the other side, helping to naturalize the somewhat strained ideas of the palindrome. The seven verses following, each with a topic heading, employ a sense of *share* in referring to the Gods obliquely, by attribute rather than by name, part of the work's overall, witty design. We can see in some of these verses the contrived, riddle-like effects of the late Kikaku manner:

Kozuchi:

Utsu tsuchi ni
Tenchi hirake
Toso mo aru
 --Rantai

[Daikoku's] Little Mallet:

Struck with a mallet
 Heaven and Earth split open
 There's spiced wine too⁴⁶⁹

Fukuro:

Nuisome ya
Miroku wo sageru
[] kagari
 --Sentoku

[Hotei's] Bag:

The year's first sewing--
 Using the [] basket
 Carried by Miroku⁴⁷⁰

Tsuru:

Tanchō wa
Minami wo shimete
Norihajime
 --Wafū

[Fukurokujū's] Crane:

As for the crane
 It's settled on the south
 Taking the year's first ride⁴⁷¹

Biwa:

Hangetsu ya
Kane tsukenu ha no
Moto no ume
 --Shūshiki (*onna*/a woman)

[Benten's] Lute:

The half-moon--
 These unblackened teeth
 The original plum⁴⁷²

⁴⁶⁹ 小槌・うつ槌に天地ひらけ屠蘇も有. The image is of the New Year opening with a crack of Daikoku's hammer, spilling its treasures, which include the medicinal wine drunk on the first day.

⁴⁷⁰ ふくろ・縫初や弥勒を提る[初]かゝり. Insect damage to the print prevents a definitive reading. The joke is on the *stupa* conventionally carried by Miroku (the Future Buddha; Hotei being its worldly incarnation), which is imagined as holding sewing goods, rather than the Buddhist law. No doubt some sewing is needed to repair tears in Hotei's bulging bag, which has a prominently sewn seam.

⁴⁷¹ 鶴・丹頂は南をしめて乗はしめ. Fukurokujū, a god of longevity, is associated with the crane, and also considered the personification of the southern polar star (南極星).

⁴⁷² 琵琶・半月や鉄漿付ぬ歯のもとの梅. Benten, wholly devoted to the arts, never married, and so does not blacken her teeth. The half moon reminds the poet of teeth, and also suggests incompleteness. White plum blossoms are a symbol of feminine purity. Thus the connotation is that Benten has retained her virginity. Notably, the only female god here was assigned to the only female poet to describe.

Tsue:

Tsue ni nobi
Matsu ni sau wo
Hatsu hi kage
 --Ryūtō

[Jūrōjin's] Staff:

It lengthens on the staff
 And from both sides of the pine
 Emerges the light of the first day⁴⁷³

Hoko:

Tamaboko ya
Michi no togari mo
Fugo oroshi
 --Sanseki

[Bishamon's] Dagger:

The jeweled dagger--
 Where the road tapers to a point
 They're sending down lottery baskets⁴⁷⁴

Akame:

Kaizome wa
Kami no sao nari
Mae no sakana
 --Jokō

The Red Eyes [of Ebisu's Sea Bream]:

The year's first purchase
 Is the god's [fishing] pole
 The fish right before him⁴⁷⁵

In this first illustrated surimono, as in so many thereafter, the playful spirit of poets finds its perfect complement in the New Year, a time of lightness and laughter. Here, the poets skip glibly across the surface of their material, making no deep comment, but entertaining the reader with puns, riddles and comic imagery. Directness and simplicity are eschewed for layers of allusion, which pile on one another to outline the print's absent, ethereal subject, the Seven Gods of Fortune. But in fact the conceit of the print can be seen to develop out of its central image, which, precisely because it is a standard, generic picture of the kind sold for use at the New Year, brings with it familiar connotations that then structure the layout and subjects of the poetry. The

⁴⁷³ つゑ・杖に伸松に左右を初日影. Jūrōjin carries a staff, from which hangs a scroll of wisdom.

⁴⁷⁴ 鉾・玉鉾や道の尖りも畚おろし. A difficult poem to translate. "Fugo oroshi" means literally "put/send down a basket," but also "flint." In the New Year's lottery, prizes were sent down on baskets to their winners from an upper floor. "Togari" means to taper, but also an edge. So a second meaning seems to be that the jeweled dagger (a lottery prize, and also a symbol of Bishamon-ten as a warrior figure and God of Wealth) could be used to start a fire with the stones at the road edge.

⁴⁷⁵ 赤目・買初は神の竿なり前の魚. Ebisu, the god of commerce, could never resist an opportunity to fish—or here, to shop. He often carries with him a pole on which he has caught a sea bream, a customary New Year meal for the felicitous sound of its name, *tai* (*omedetai*=good fortune).

result is a cohesive, ordered work that delivers an impression of the wit and sophistication of its makers.

The second illustrated *saitan* surimono of 1710, Kōka's "Plum and Lottery Prizes," is seemingly an enticing exception to the Sentoku-Kikaku school domination of extant surimono, though it generally presents a quite similar aesthetic. The work's status as an exception is in doubt because almost all of the 26 poets on the print have playfully assumed aliases—a game also to some extent seen on Rantai's own surimono.⁴⁷⁶ The one poet appearing under his actual name is the commissioner, Kōka, who was very well connected to the *haikai* scene in Kyōto, not Edo. The name Kōka, for example, appears in two publications of 1692, *Kawachi habutae* (河内羽二重 • "The Feathery Silk of Kawachi") and *Kuyamigusa* (悔み草 • "Grasses of Regret"), in which he composes prominently alongside great Kamigata poets like Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴 (1642-1693), Itō Shintoku 伊藤信徳 (1633-1697), Konishi Raizan 小西来山 (1654-1716), Saitō Kasu 斎藤柏 (dates unknown) and Kitamura Kigin 北村季吟 (1624-1705). A *dokugin kasen* (独吟歌仙 • 36 verse set by one poet) of his own opens the former work, after which he composes in three other sets, first with Saikaku and Raizan, then Kasu, Kigin and others, while *hokku* submitted by the likes of Bashō and Kikaku fill the rear. Moreover, both of these books, like Kōka's surimono, were published by Kyōto's Izutsuya Shōbei. These tantalizing Kyōto connections suggest that Kōka's 1710 surimono was likely produced there, not in Edo. In fact, there is sufficient evidence to posit that three of the first seven surimono in the

⁴⁷⁶ Rantai and his associates add "ko/shi" (子 • "child") to their names on several surimono, such as Nos. 18, 24 and 42 of the Aichi Kyōiku Daigaku collection on Okamoto's list, thus Rantaiko, Senkakuko, Jokōko etc. Not all of the poets on these prints take this suffix, however. It may be a gesture of humility, if the character is read "ko," as child, or mock sagehood, if the character is read "shi," as with Chinese figures. Okamoto suggests this mark is the privilege of a samurai (士 • shi), separating Rantai and his associates from the other participants. Rantai seems to have started this practice when he composed for surimono with Kyōto's Shin'an. Shin'an, who is given the position of honor at the beginning of the print, never takes 子.

Rantai collection came from Kyōto, though not nearly such a high percentage after,⁴⁷⁷ implying not only that—as far as we can tell from extant works—the early use of surimono in each city was virtually simultaneous, but also that surimono may even have originated in Kyōto, and it was from there that Rantai and his associates took their example. Considering the Izutsuya’s monopoly over the immediate precursors of surimono, *saitan mitsumono* and *saitanchō*, Kyōto would in fact seem a most likely place for surimono’s birth. But what exactly would this setting imply for the nature of the surimono made there, as opposed to those made in Edo?

Although a three-week journey on foot separated Kyōto and Edo, the interconnections between these major centers of *haikai* practice were intricate, and became still more active and complex with the expansion of woodblock printing. Among the Kikaku-Sentoku poets involved in early surimono, three are especially important in this regard: Teisa, who stayed in Kyōto from 1701-1702, and returned for visits later; Senkaku, who trained as a Sentoku poet for 16 years before relocating to Kyōto in 1706, bringing Edo-style *tentori* practices with him; and Tantan, an Ōsaka-born poet who came to Edo in 1700 and studied with Kikaku before moving to Kyōto in the autumn of 1708, shortly after his appearance on “First Horse.” Another entry on this last work, signed “Kyō-Senkaku” (京仙鶴・Senkaku of Kyōto), reveals the possibility for interaction between poets in the two cities on surimono even from a distance, utilizing the developing post system to deliver verses, though of course this was possible for individual *hokku* only, not the later verses of *mitsumono*.⁴⁷⁸ Senkaku

⁴⁷⁷ Kyōto surimono in the Aichi Kyōiku Daigaku collection include Okamoto nos. 1, 5, 7, 14, 21-23, 61, 62, 71, 74, and possibly nos. 13 and 46. To some extent, these works, particularly Kōka’s, call into question the generalization made by Louise Virgin, that “townsmen in Kyōto and Ōsaka were more frugal and conservative in the practice of commissioning *ichimaizuri* [surimono] than Edoites.” (21)

⁴⁷⁸ Distant poets could initiate a *mitsumono*, however, by submitting the opening *hokku*. Other poets could then respond poetically, ultimately sending the work back to the submitter, and surprising him or her with the content. We saw such a practice in the 1702 Ransetsu surimono, in which Hyōka submits a *hokku* for a *mitsumono* from Ōtsu.

also takes the position of honor—the first poem, usually indicative of the surimono’s commissioner⁴⁷⁹—on the only other surimono in the Rantai collection with an “Izutsuya Shōbei-ban” signature. This is a 1711 *saitan* piece that includes *hokku* from his master Sentoku, his fellow disciples Senshū and Seiga, and Kikaku students like Teisa and Hakuun, as well as a single Setsumon entry from Hyōka.⁴⁸⁰ Although most of these major contributing poets were Edo men, the disciples who appear with Senkaku in the opening *mitsumono*—Suishiki and Chikuji⁴⁸¹—were both from Kyōto, and taking into account Senkaku’s prominent position and three poems on the print (more than any other), plus the Izutsuya signature, it seems certain that this work was designed and produced in Kyōto. Considering this kind of interaction between the cities, the mere presence of some major Edo poets on a surimono then is not sufficient in itself to assume that the work was made there.

The hypothesis of a similar Kyōto origin for the 1710 illustrated Kōka work is given yet stronger support by another extant Kōka surimono, undated, but without aliases, and thought to be of the Hōei Era (1704-1711).⁴⁸² Entitled *Teisa Raihō Kinen*, (貞佐来訪記念・“Commemorating Teisa’s Arrival”), the work is one of the first extant examples of a surimono made for a personal, rather than seasonal occasion.

⁴⁷⁹ *Haibungaku daijiten* (Kadokawa, 1998) in fact has an entry for this work under *Senkaku Saitan*, remarkably describing the piece as a “*saitanchō*” (469). I am wary of the assumption that the first poet on a *haikai* surimono is always the commissioner, though this does often seem to be the case. In the 1708 “First Horse,” however, usually attributed to Teisa, this poet comes last. Interestingly, in the transition to *kyōka* surimono late in the eighteenth century, the order of hierarchy was similarly reversed, with the highest ranking poet typically coming last. This change may merely reflect the fact that the commissioners gradually came to be rank and file poets, however, while elite poets were celebrated (and paid) guests on surimono.

⁴⁸⁰ Hyōka, who experienced personal tragedy in his life, moved into Miidera Temple in Ōtsu after a brief period in Kyōto. He and Senkaku became close friends after Senkaku came to Kyōto in 1706, according to the *Haibungaku daijiten*, 790. Hyōka also appears on another surimono led by Senkaku in 1718, no.21 in the Aichi Kyōiku Daigaku collection. This work, like the 1711 *saitan* surimono, also includes Suishiki and Chikuji.

⁴⁸¹ Dates unknown. Of Chikuji, the *Haibungaku Daijiten* states that he was a Kyōto man close to the Sentoku poets in Edo, who worked to bring together *haikai* world in the two cities (555). Both men appear with Senkaku on a later surimono as well.

⁴⁸² No. 7 in Okamoto’s list of the Aichi Kyōiku Daigaku collection. The date attribution is Okamoto’s.

The Edo poet Kuwaoka Teisa, as mentioned, stayed in Kyōto from 1701-1702, developing close friendships with the poets there. This surimono seems to have been made on a subsequent visit, likely after 1706, as Senkaku, who moved to Kyōto then, also appears prominently on this work.⁴⁸³ Kōka presents the first verse, answered by Teisa in the typical *aisatsu haikai* pattern, while Teisa and Koraku (an otherwise unknown poet) trade verses at the close (Koraku-Teisa-Koraku). Like Koraku, most of the other poets participating seem to have been minor figures, but notable are two apparently young disciples of Kikaku, Kimaru 其丸 and Kiyū 其友, who must have joined the elder Teisa for support on his journey. These names, the last especially, meaning essentially “friend of Kikaku,” suggest that this print may date not too long after Kikaku’s death. Also notable on this print, in relation to the subject of relations between even distant *haikai* poets, is a single appearance by Kitamura Shichiri 北村七里 (1663-1726), a Niigata poet.

Turning back to the 1710 “Plum and Lottery Prizes,” it is now possible to assert more forcefully that this work was designed and produced in Kyōto, bearing the same Izutsuya Shōbei signature as Senkaku’s 1711 (Kyōto) surimono, and led by the same poet who commissioned the *Teisa raihō kinen* surimono welcoming Teisa to Kyōto. However, Kyōto production does not necessarily mean, as we have seen, purely Kyōto poets, especially in the case of one as well connected as Kōka, leaving the identity of the anonymous contributors uncertain. Indeed, if the work were sent to Rantai, as it seemingly was, there must have been some personal connection between Rantai and at least one of the poets—as in the other Kyōto-made Senkaku and Kōka surimono, which were related to and included some of Rantai’s close associates in

⁴⁸³ That Senkaku is not merely visiting with Teisa, but residing already in Kyōto, is suggested by the fact that, although he was a poet with as much seniority as Teisa in Edo, he is not mentioned in the title. Likewise, that his was not merely a mailed *hokku* is evident in the fact that Senkaku appears three times on the print, (Kōka himself appears twice, and Teisa four times), responding to one another.

Edo. Considering Rantai's relationship from 1717 with the elegant Kyōto poet Shin'an, a pupil of the same Shintoku with whom Kōka had performed in the 1690s, Rantai may indeed have had close Kyōto connections, perhaps directly with Kōka, though it bears noting here that it was Shin'an who came to Edo and sought out Rantai, not vice-versa.⁴⁸⁴ In any case, although we may never be able to solve the mystery of just who appeared on this print and what its connection to Rantai was, the 1710 Kōka surimono is an important early example that deserves some close attention.

The work opens with the standard year date, followed immediately by an unusual signature: "Fushimi Momozato Shōkōshitsu Kōka," (伏見桃里招交室幸貨・"Shōkōshitsu Kōka, of Peach Village in Fushimi, [Kyōto].")⁴⁸⁵ The name Shōkōshitsu Kōka is composed of characters that literally mean "beckon-mingle-room happy-coin" while Fushimi is the location of a Kyōto pleasure quarter, and "Peach Village" a fanciful place name with idealized erotic connotations. Although Kōka's profession is uncertain, it has thus been hypothesized that he was a brothel owner.⁴⁸⁶ This assumption, or at least the fact of Kōka's intimate connection with the pleasure quarters, is supported by the aliases used for the poetry on this print, which resemble those of courtesans, mock or actual. Some of these have the ring of classical literature, particularly the Tale of Genji: Wakana, Ukibashi, Kaoru, Fujinami, Hanakiri, Yoshino, Yamanoi, Imagawa and Kaguyama.⁴⁸⁷ Others are much more prosaic, Takahashi, Ōbashi, Kawasaki, and Ōiso,⁴⁸⁸ and seem to refer to actual family names or places of origin, rather than the romantic titles of courtesans. Still others,

⁴⁸⁴ See Okamoto Masaru in Kira, Ed. (2002), 75

⁴⁸⁵ In general, mention of a poet's living place was an indication that the work was being published in a different area, as in "Ōtsu Hyōka" on the 1702 Ransetsu saitan published in Edo, or the aforementioned "Kyō-Senkaku." I have therefore spent some time in demonstrating that this was in fact a Kyōto work. The addition of the address, in this case, is for a different purpose, as will soon become clear.

⁴⁸⁶ Chiba Museum (1997), 154.

⁴⁸⁷ わか菜, 浮橋, かほる, 藤波, 花桐, よし野, 山の井, 今川, and かぐ山.

⁴⁸⁸ 高橋, 大橋, 河崎, and 大磯

such as Tsūrō (通路 • “a commonly traveled road”), are quite obviously satirical nicknames, calling into some question the assumption that the aliases used are those taken by real courtesans. Tempting as it may be to try to uncover the pennames of well-known poets hiding in these monikers, these seem to have been generated not in relation to the poets, but rather to images of women of the pleasure quarter, and perhaps those of Kōka’s own house. Although logically it may be hard to believe that viewers took these attributions of authorship at their word, fantasy has a way of overcoming rationality, and books with poetry that claimed to have been written and/or inscribed by courtesans did become a popular genre later in the eighteenth century.⁴⁸⁹ Doubtless, the idea of receiving elegant New Year’s congratulations from a group of some 26 beautiful courtesans must have been a titillating conceit for the men who received this surimono—and if Kōka were in fact a brothel owner, the print would have provided superb customer relations, as though the women were gratefully greeting their clients and asking them to return.

The first set of verses, on the subject of the plum, a symbol of purity as well as of feminine beauty, follows an image of a blossoming plum tree, apparently drawn by Kōka himself.⁴⁹⁰ In terms of text-image interplay, this construction represents something of a step backward from Rantai’s work of the same year, utilizing the image merely as a pictorial *dai*, rather than as a tool for shaping broader structure or deeper interaction with poetry. Specifically, the poems are neither directed by nor intimately related to the exact details of the image. The illustration is thus largely decorative, a generic picture simply standing in for the character “plum” and allowing all of its varied nuances, as the following sampling makes clear:

⁴⁸⁹ For example, Kitao Masanobu’s *Yoshiwara keisei shin bijin awase jihitsu kagami* (“A Mirror of the True Writing of Yoshiwara’s New Courtesan Beauties, Compared”). For a description of this project, see Jack Hillier, *Japanese Prints: 300 Years of Albums and Books* (London: British Museum, 1980), 76.

⁴⁹⁰ The signature, with a rather unusual suffix for a painting, reads “Kōka-hyō” (かうくハ表). Suffixes like “ga,” “hitsu,” “zu” or “sha” (画, 筆, 図, 写) are the common forms of painting signatures.

<i>Kono hana to Sakuya Shirojusu Hichirimen</i>	With this flower Blooms white satin, Scarlet crepe ⁴⁹¹
<i>Sanemori ya Kuro kami yururu Yoru no ume</i>	Sanemori— Black hair shimmers Plums at night ⁴⁹²
<i>Mayu usuku wa eda no Nioi kana</i>	With her thin brows Everything about her has The scent of plum branches ⁴⁹³
<i>Hana makan kokoro no Ume ni shite</i>	Let's scatter flowers Using the plums Of a heart lost in love ⁴⁹⁴

In the majority, the poetry extends between two poles, the standard imagery of the plum, represented in the illustration, and the contemporary world of love, represented by the courtesans' aliases after each verse. That the authors of the poetry are male is clear from the point of view they take, focused on the attractions of female beauty. Though somewhat more erotic than Rantai's *saitan* surimono of the same year, Kōka's work reveals a similar sense of *share* aesthetics, based on a Kikaku-esque sense of sophisticated play, shot through with some of the Sentokumon's worldliness. The creation of this work in Kyōto does not then imply that it is of a different species from the Edo-born works, and in fact, Edo poets were likely involved in supplying some part of its poetic content.

Although the 1710 *Kōka saitan* and 1711 *Senkaku saitan* both bear the signature of Izutsuya Shōbei, revealing their Kyōto production, a new signature is seen on surimono for the first time in the latter year, suggesting either a shift to, or

⁴⁹¹ 此花と咲や白繻子緋ちりめん.

⁴⁹² 実盛や黒髪揺る夜の梅. In *Heike Monogatari*, Saitō Sanemori dyed his hair black in order to appear younger and be accepted as a worthy opponent on the battlefield. He subsequently lost his life, but was revered for his devotion. This is a surprising derivation from the main theme of the poetry, which is light.

⁴⁹³ 眉うすく総ては枝の匂ひ哉.

⁴⁹⁴ 花捲かんまとひ心の梅にして.

simultaneous production in Edo. A 1711 “First Horse” surimono led by the female *haikai* poet Shūshiki includes a cast as large and important as the 1708 “First Horse,” with 49 poems by 27 poets, 14 of whom also appeared on the 1708 work. Shūshiki’s cast also includes at least three women, herself, the poet Sonome 園女 (1649-1723), a pupil of Bashō who equaled Shūshiki in popularity, plus a daughter of the poet Senshū, identified by the simple name “Man” (沾州娘万)—though several of the unknown poets, judging from their names, were likely female, including Shusshi, Jomo, Koren, and a poet identified as “the twenty year old Chisen.”⁴⁹⁵ In addition to these touches of poetic variety, Shūshiki’s print at its close bears the signature “Yoshida-shi Uhaku-shi” (吉田氏宇白梓) the first of 14 surimono in the Rantai collection to include some version of this signature.⁴⁹⁶ Examining several of these prints with the Uhaku name, we can see the incredible care, effort and expense expended on early surimono, and receive a better sense of some of early surimono’s aesthetic ideals.

Yoshida Uhaku 吉田宇白 (?-1761) is a figure better constructed by his surviving productions than historical details, which are scant. As a block carver and publisher in Edo, as well as a practicing *haikai* poet of the Raisen (来川)⁴⁹⁷ line under the name Gyosen (魚川), he was positioned, like Izutsuya Shōbei in Kyōto, to receive many commissions for *haikai* works, especially *saitan* and memorial pieces. His name, in fact, appears on a large number of eighteenth century *haikai* publications, private and commercial, largely those for Edoza (Sentoku-Kikaku line) poets. Several

⁴⁹⁵ 出紫, 茹毛, 古蓮, 二十才千泉. Other unusual poets on this piece include Nanpo (南歩), 葉 and Irimatsu (入松).

⁴⁹⁶ Other variations of the signature include: 吉田宇白(2), 吉田宇白版(7), 宇白版(2), 吉田宇白彫(1) 彫工吉田宇白(1). These make it clear that Uhaku was involved with both carving and print production.

⁴⁹⁷ Adachi Raisen 足立来川 (?-1736) was the son of Adachi Rinri 足立倫里 (?-1737), the leading pupil of Rantai’s associate Shimura Murin (志村無倫.) The three surimono Murin commissioned contain poems by both Rantai and Rinri.

of these are notable for their beautiful illustrations, particularly on the covers and first pages of *kubaribon*.⁴⁹⁸ Similarly, of the fifteen illustrated surimono in the Rantai collection, four directly contain Uhaku's signature—one Izutsuya's and one the signature of another carver, Miyamoto Ri'ichi.⁴⁹⁹ But Uhaku's four illustrated surimono are distinct from all but two of the rest of the collection in one aspect: they are *colored* works.⁵⁰⁰ In fact, Uhaku's experiments with color printing on surimono make them the very first single sheet works in Japan to employ multi-block color application, the earliest, *Shin'an keitan* (信安鶏旦・“Dawn of [the Year of] the Bird, for Shin'an”) of 1717, over two decades before the process was employed in commercial print making.⁵⁰¹ We might recall from Chapter One that an anonymous account of 1771, *Kyojitsu baka monogatari*, had described the development of color printing this way:

At the beginning of the Gembun Era [1736-1740], when the group of Bōjian Keirin released a spring surimono with a picture of a bow for ceremonial exorcism, Yoshida Gyosen for the first time used a three block printing method, with blue-green, yellow and rose, as well as a technique for pushing out the white areas [embossing] that caused a stir in the society of that time. The now-common *haikai* surimono of our day are the flowers of these innovations.⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁸ *Ukiyo-e Jiten* (Gabundō, 1974), 417, lists five of these in particular as especially fine. Notably, two of these five were books edited by Sentoku and Senshū.

⁴⁹⁹ No. 64 in Okamoto's list. The signature is 彫工宮本里一鳥. These are by no means the only surimono in the collection signed by the carver/producer, but none of the others signed are all illustrated.

⁵⁰⁰ Specifically, three of the four illustrated works with Uhaku's signature use a multi-block coloring process, and one hand-painted pigments. A total of 5 of the 15 illustrated prints in the Rantai collection then employ multiple woodblocks to add coloring. I am not counting here single block works that use a color for the key-block outline, such as the deep indigo employed on Rantai's "Treasure Ship."

⁵⁰¹ By myriad accounts, all coming from *ukiyo-e* studies, the first appearance of the *benizuri-e*, or rose-printed picture was in the early 1740s. See specifically David Waterhouse, *Images of Eighteenth Century Japan* (Royal Ontario Museum, 1975), no. 33, 72, which introduces a *benizuri-e* (quite possibly a surimono) with calendar marks for 1842, and Tim Clark in *Dawn of the Floating World* (Royal Academy of Arts, 2000), no.91, 226, again referring to this work as the earliest known. The *ukiyo-e* designer Okumura Masanobu, who I have mentioned in connection with the pictorial transformation of Edoza *haikai* aesthetics, was the designer of this 1742 work, and also claimed on one of his later prints to be the first to employ the technique. Simple printing with colors in books, however, long preceded Uhaku, being employed already in the seventeenth century for an astrological work.

⁵⁰² This description appears in the second volume of *Kyojitsu baka-monogatari*, in a section titled "Beni-e no henka" or "The Development of Rose Pictures." In contemporary terminology, these would

元文のはじめ、卯時庵珪琳の社中より、春興のすり物出
時破魔弓の画を吉田魚川はじめて青黄赤の三遍摺りを
なし、およびうち出しの白きを工みて其頃世に鳴り、今
普く俳諧摺ものゝ花とはなれり。

Though this particular work is not extant, and its attribution as the first experiment in color printing clearly mistaken, textual sources like this one make us aware of the larger world of surimono production, of which surviving works provide only a glimpse.⁵⁰³ Fortunately, however, one extant color-printed surimono prepared by Uhaku does contain Keirin's early signature (Figure 18), allowing us to imagine more clearly what his Gembun Era *hamayumi* ("exorcism bow") surimono may have looked like.⁵⁰⁴ This work, commissioned by the Sentokumon's Kōshūsai Senshū, is yet again designed to celebrate a "First Horse Day." In this case, there is no year designation, but the work almost certainly dates to the late 1720s. Considering its rich, colorful surface and stunning, technical excellence, it may perhaps have been part of a grand, initial statement by Senshū in the year after his assumption of Sentokumon leadership, following the death of Sentoku in the fifth month of 1726.⁵⁰⁵ Senshū and Keirin (here appearing as Renshi, his name until 1731) were quite close from the mid-

be called "*benizuri-e*," with "*beni-e*" referring to *sumi* outlined prints hand-painted with *beni*, an earlier practice. It also bears note that the Yoshida Gyosen mentioned in this account is likely identical with the figure known as Yoshida Uhaku (poetic name Gyosen) and probably not the same as the Yoshida Gyosen (II?) who is associated with the celebrated 1765-66 *egoyomi*.

⁵⁰³ As with Yanagisawa Nobutoki's diaries, the phrase "ima amaneku haikai surimono" (今普く俳諧摺・"now-common *haikai* surimono") for pieces c.1770 suggests far more prevalence than the scarce works surviving today would imply.

⁵⁰⁴ It bears note that the first known picture calendar, printed in *Shika no makifude* 鹿の巻筆, a *waraibanashi* (笑話・comic story) book of 1686, is also a ceremonial "good fortune" bow, the parts of which contain the numerals for the year's large and small months. See *Nihon koten bungaku taikei*, Vol. 100 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970), 205 for a picture and description of this bow.

⁵⁰⁵ Louise Virgin states that this work dates to 1726, but the reason for her exact attribution (not provided in Japanese scholarship) is unclear. Senshū's only other commissioned surimono extant dates to 1727, and I feel this date more likely in regard to his changing position in Edo circles.

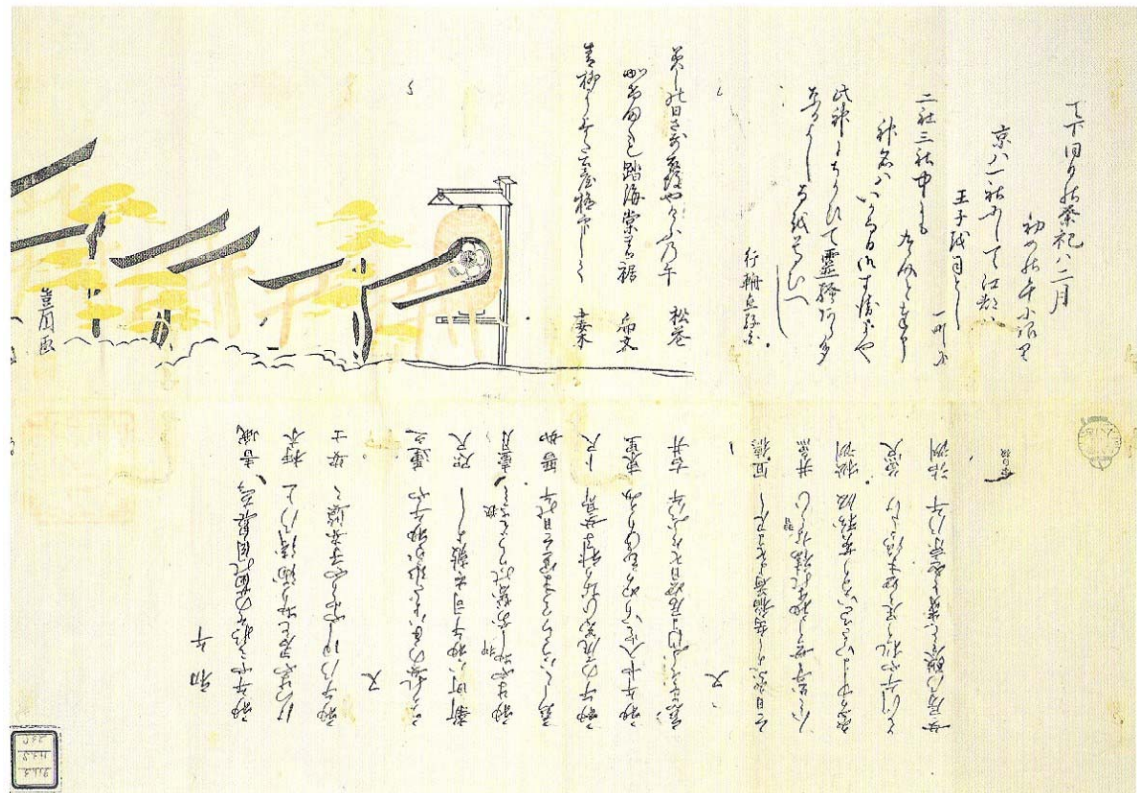


Figure 18: “The Inari Shrine,” An *ōbōshozenshiban* surimono in celebration of a “First Horse” (初午) Festival, c.1727. Commissioned by Kishi Senshū and illustrated by Yamamoto Gaian, with color printing by Yoshida Gyosen. Aichi University of Education.

1720s, and appear together on an unusual 1727 autumn *meigetsu* (名月) surimono,⁵⁰⁶ also commissioned by Senshū—along with Seiga (青峨), Anshi (安士), and Kogetsu (壺月), who all appear on both works.⁵⁰⁷ Senshū’s unrivalled position as leader of the Edo *haikai* scene was not to last long, however, as some of the very poets who appear with him on this print were to break with him in 1731, forming the influential Goshikizumi group. But for the moment, Renshi, Shijaku and Anshi seem fully wrapped in the Sentokumon fold, and this “First Horse” surimono business (or pleasure) as usual—with one exception. Although this work’s layout is typical of the *renga*-style *kashi* format that dominates early surimono, folded in the center with text running towards the middle from either edge, here one-quarter of the sheet is devoted to a beautiful, color printed image of the Inari Shrine, with its famous succession of torii gates. Exactly as in the description of Keirin’s *hamayumi* surimono above, this illustration is printed in three colors, pale rose, mustard yellow, and a dark indigo, and even has a similar quasi-religious theme, related to shrine ceremonies. In this case, the reference is to festivals held at the Inari Shrine in Fushimi, Kyōto—and following these, at Inari Shrines everywhere—on the first horse day of the second month, a day on which the gods were believed to descend to the shrines, bringing blessings. The image is a bright, spirited but simple, rendering of the Inari Shrine grounds, signed by its artist, the poet Yamamoto Gaien 山本豈円 (1692-1764).⁵⁰⁸ This image can be seen

⁵⁰⁶ A moon viewing surimono for the fifteenth day of the eighth month. A rare occasion among early surimono, most of which seem to have been given in the first three months of the year.

⁵⁰⁷ These are nos. 45 and 70 in Okamoto’s list of the Aichi Kyōiku Daigaku collection. See Appendix I for biographies of these poets. See also no. 48, a summer 1730 surimono with a very similar cast, though lacking Anshi. Another 1730 work, *Zoku Edo ikada*, shares an almost exact cast with this 1730 surimono (Fūba, Renshi, Shijaku, Kogetsu, Renyō editing, preface by Seiga, postscript by Senshū)—also lacking Anshi. As Seiga died in 1730, Senshū’s “First Horse” must date to that year or before.

⁵⁰⁸ Also identified as Kien, as in the Chiba Museum catalogue. He later took the family name Mori, and the pen name Saiga, with which he appears in the illustrated 1737 haikai anthology *Uzuki teikin*, with Kitamura Wafū, among other Edo poets. This anthology is especially notable for containing the first known picture-poem combination by Buson. We will also see Gaen emerge again later, as the illustrator of another important surimono.

as a fairly straightforward illustration of the opening *hokku*, which itself, however, suggests a coming change of atmosphere:

<i>Utsukushi no</i>	Beautiful sunlight
<i>Hi saki kasumu ya</i>	Seeps into mist just ahead
<i>Kyō no uma</i>	Today's Horse ⁵⁰⁹

If one expected to find a quiet atmosphere of devotion on Senshū's surimono for its connection with a religious festival, one would look in vain. In fact, following the calm of the initial *mitsumono*, many of the *hokku* on this print take up the festive theme of Fushimi's *Hatsu-uma* in relation to its nearby pleasure quarters—a theme the commissioning Senshū particularly favored in his *haikai*. For example, Renshi:

<i>Ukare me no</i>	The hand of the excited girl
<i>Te wa yodare-mizu</i>	Is covered in slobber--
<i>Hatsu-uma ya</i>	First Day of the Horse ⁵¹⁰

His good friend and later Goshikizumi collaborator Shijaku adds this poem:

<i>Shinmachi wa</i>	In the “new quarter”
<i>Hatsu-uma tsukasa</i>	The First Horse director
<i>Taiko yoshi</i>	Plays that drum so well ⁵¹¹

Bokushaku's contribution:

<i>Hatsu uma no</i>	The First Horse
<i>Shiri warai nari</i>	Shuns her with its buttocks
<i>Kanko joro</i>	The shrine prostitute ⁵¹²

And Senshū's concluding verse:

<i>Nyōbō no</i>	A woman's buttocks
<i>Shiri to ikutose</i>	And the passing year
<i>Kyō no uma</i>	A Kyoto Horse today ⁵¹³

⁵⁰⁹ 美しの日さき霞やけふの午.

⁵¹⁰ うかれ女の手はよたれ水初午や.

⁵¹¹ 新町は初午司太鼓よし. A reference to the *taikō-mochi*, the drum-bearing entertainer who joined a courtesan and client for entertainment, and also to *tsukasa-uma*, the shrine horse. “New town” is a direct reference to the pleasure quarters.

⁵¹² 初午の尻笑ひなり管子女郎.

⁵¹³ 女房の尻と幾とせ京の午. Apparently the “rear view” is taken on both as they pass by.

The use of horse imagery for erotic symbolism goes back at least as far as the Tale of Genji, in the title character's exchange of poems with the over-amorous Lady Naishi,⁵¹⁴ providing a model for these jocular poets to emulate. Even previously unnoticed aspects of the image, such as the prominent chrysanthemum on the lantern (a symbol of man-boy love), or the multiple shrine gates themselves, gentle and dignified as they appear at first glance, are shaded by the overtones of the poetry, making us aware not only of the erotic connotations of gates, and particularly of the repeated entry of them at the Inari Shrine, but also that their color on the print is a flesh-tone pink.⁵¹⁵ Gates, in fact, figure prominently in one poem, in connection with love, while another verse refers to childbirthing:

<i>Koisu to iu</i>	I'll be between
<i>Mon ni iru hi zo</i>	The gates of loving
<i>Kyō no uma</i>	A Kyōto Horse today ⁵¹⁶
<i>Hatsu-uma no</i>	In the same lodge
<i>Onaji yadori ya</i>	As First Horse
<i>Koyasu baba</i>	The old midwife ⁵¹⁷

With regard to text-image relations then, Senshū's "First Horse" stands out as one of the first surimono to engage in what I will here call text-image friction, or dissonance, establishing expectations with imagery, then radically forcing re-evaluation of them with textual input. Simply put, we cannot have the same impression of the image after reading the print as we did at first glance, for the texts recontextualize the image in a rather startling, unconventional way. But the change

⁵¹⁴ In the *Momiji no ga* (紅葉の賀) section, Lady Naishi refers to the men's members as horses, suggesting they might graze by parting the low bamboo of her grove. Genji retorts that were his horses to graze there, he fears that they might be chased away by the many other horses to which the grove has been opened.

⁵¹⁵ The actual color of most shrine gates is a bright vermillion. It is true that choice of pigments was limited at this time, so this was possibly the closest red available. Some fading of the *beni*, which even in well-preserved specimens is a softer rose-red, may also likely have occurred.

⁵¹⁶ 恋すてふ門に居ぬひそけふの午。

⁵¹⁷ 初午の同じやとりや子安婆。

does not come only from the verses alone, being contained in potential within the image itself. This is no longer illustration, in the sense of an image that describes (“illustrates”) the content of the verse (the pleasure quarters), but something in fact closer to its very opposite, an image that tricks the viewer into entering a certain state of mind, only to pull the carpet out from underneath with the textual component. The quiet, uninhabited shrine scene, though in retrospect lively in its unbalanced arrangement, is in fact contradicted by the verses, teeming with humanity and the energy of human sexual desire. Rather than harmonizing, poetry and image clash, with interesting results. Although the thematic content of the poetry then does not greatly differ from that of the other “Fushimi” surimono by Kōka (merely substituting first horse for plum as the pole of reference for the pleasure quarters), the operation of these pieces on the viewer is in fact substantially different, due to the role of the illustration.

It is, moreover, the very advancement in technical qualities in Senshū’s “First Horse,” specifically the color printing that brings the image to the forefront as an eye-catching innovation, which allows for these more complex interactions between text and image. The image here is made into much more than mere decoration to serve the text, appearing in the same tone of ink within it, as in Kōka’s print; rather, it commands the viewer’s attention well before the verses, setting up a mood and touching on established associations and impressions before overturning them. The image, in short, becomes an independent player, as important as the verses, and capable of asserting its own unique direction and interest. Uhaku’s achievements in color printing, therefore, rather than simply advancements in the decorative beauty of surfaces, should be seen as an essential part of the internal development of surimono as well, allowing for more complex text-image interactions.

With this fact in mind, it's worthwhile to pay closer attention to the nature of surimono's printed images and their method of production, looking first at Senshū's "First Horse" surimono, in comparison to the 1717 *Shin'an keitan*, also produced in color by Uhaku. In early illustrated surimono, such as Rantai's "Treasure Ship" or Kōka's "Plum and Lottery Prizes," texts and images are produced in the same manner, with a single block of hard cherry wood carved out to leave the lines that are to appear on the print in relief. These blocks could be printed with any color, as in the dark indigo used on Rantai's work, though black *sumi* was standard. The process of adding additional colors by printing—which gave a flat, uniform application of pigment entirely unlike that of a brush, allowing for crisper control, evenness and translucency⁵¹⁸—demanded that additional blocks be employed, carved based on trial printings of the first, key block, generally one block for each color. The problem then became how to align the blocks so that areas of color fell exactly where they were supposed to, without unintentional overlapping, and keeping within the areas of the first block's black outline. Yoshida Uhaku, faced with the difficulties of achieving perfect registration of blocks at this stage of technology,⁵¹⁹ deals with the problem in various ways. In the 1717 *Shin'an keitan*, which uses only one additional block for coloring its image of a paulownia tree, spreading its branches over the initial verses (Figure 19), the outlines of the tree and leaves are suggested with broken strokes, allowing for some vagaries in color application. If, here and there, the color does not exactly fill a leaf outline or protrudes slightly from the trunk, the gaps between lines

⁵¹⁸ Any single one of these effects could be achieved by a brush, but not all three together. The addition of water to create translucency, for example, resulted in running, pooling, uneven distribution of pigments, while perfect control of edges and application required thicker pigments, implying opacity. On a block, however, even translucent pigments seeped evenly into the wood, and so were capable of being applied with perfect control. The woodblock print was not then merely a technology for the reproduction of works created by brush; it was an entirely different medium, capable of producing a different kind of work.

⁵¹⁹ Hillier (1980), for example, notes problems with the registration of color blocks even in the 1748 and 1753 printings of the *Mustard Seed Garden Manual*, still considered one of the earliest ventures in color printing in Japan.

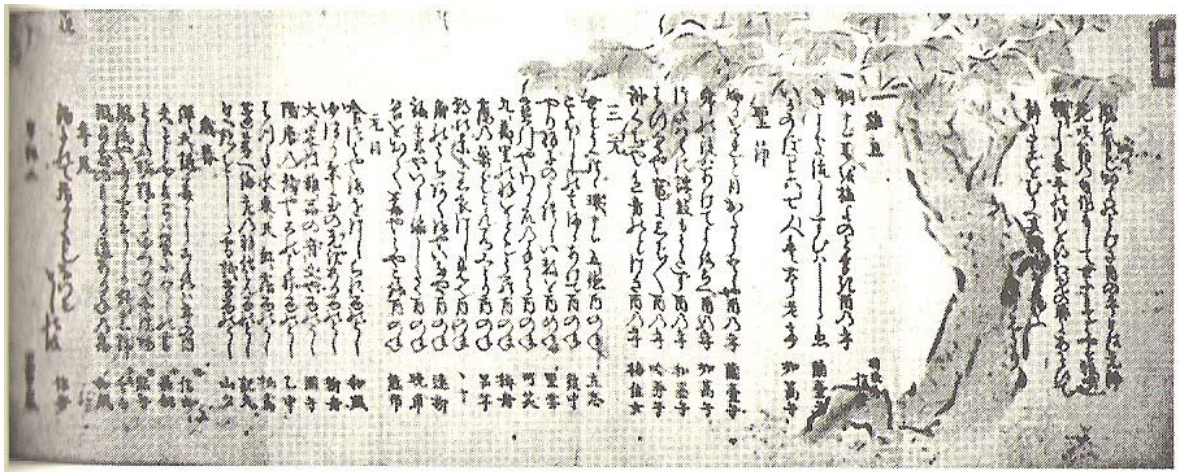


Figure 19: *Shin'an Keitan*. An *ōbōzenshiban* surimono, printed on one side only, issued in celebration of the opening of the bird year [1717], commissioned by Uemura Shin'an with an unsigned illustration of a paulownia tree, printed in two colors by Yoshida Gyosen. Aichi University of Education.

allow for some seeping, and create a sketchy, impressionistic effect that does not demand precision, undoing any sense of sloppiness. The challenge is exponentially expanded, however, in the Senshū “First Horse,” which employs three color-blocks. Here, Uhaku does away with the key-block outline entirely, printing areas of color with the so-called “boneless” technique, a method of color printing developed in China in the previous century. Thus Uhaku, in recreating a Chinese precedent, cannot be called the originator of this technique, but to some extent he did have “reinvent the wheel,” following in the tracks of those who had gone before him and attempting to figure out how it was done. Nor did Uhaku ever completely master the multiple-block printing method with key-block outline, a technique he left for his son, Gyosen II, to work out. Nevertheless, each of these works represents a major advance in printmaking technology and its usage in early eighteenth century Edo, far ahead of the commercial industry in Japan, thus radically revising long-held assumptions that the first single sheet works with printed colors date to the 1740s. But how are we to understand that the individual commissioning power of private poets could effect an advance that the power of mass publishing could not?

At the heart of this question lies the very difference between surimono and commercial prints, which we have seen pointedly differed in size, format, paper quality and content to emphasize the surimono as a special work, a necessary distinction if surimono were to be suitable to serve as a poetic presentation. But more than any of these consciously arranged surface features, surimono’s very basis of production and its implications necessarily gave these works a different nature—a wider range of material, more technological possibilities, and the drive to utilize them. In some respects, in an age of advancing commercialization, a developing market that sought to feel out consumer demand and provide appropriate supply, surimono represent a throwback to the days of medieval patronage, when pleasing a single,

wealthy patron was more important than pleasing the masses who existed around him. Surimono, in other words, unlike commercial prints, had no obligation to sell, to be cost-effective, or in line with market demands and standards, only to satisfy the commissioner. Moreover, the field of surimono was not only aesthetically freer, tied only to the interests of the sending and receiving groups, but also motivated to move forward into new ventures by the competitive spirit of its participants, playfully attempting to outdo one another in excellence and originality. From the point of view of commercial publishers, on the contrary, the status quo, which was all that the average consumer knew, was in fact vastly preferable to an advance in technology that would dramatically increase the costs and difficulties of production.⁵²⁰ Moreover, though an enterprising publisher might gain a competitive advantage by introducing new content or innovations, such experiments were risky—for if the (untried) market did not move as the publisher expected, if consumers were unwilling to put out more for a higher quality print, or found a new subject unappealing, then the loss was entirely the publisher's.⁵²¹ It is for this reason that the subject matter of *ukiyo-e* is so remarkably narrow, focused almost exclusively on kabuki actors and courtesans in the eighteenth century, topics that were certain to sell, with only limited ventures into other fields. For the same reason, surimono, which had no need to please anyone but its commissioners and their friends, which introduced new ideas based on personal preferences and tried these out on a group of acquaintances, with the only fear being loss of face, was watched by commercial publishers as a kind of experimental test ground for new subject matter and printing techniques, a field—in this one respect

⁵²⁰ This commercial view of *ukiyo-e* printmaking helps to explain why prints did not incorporate color printing sooner, although the methods were there, and even used to a limited extent (in book form) from the seventeenth century.

⁵²¹ See Akai Tatsurō, "The Common People and Painting" in Chie Nakane and Shinzaburo Ōishi (Eds.) *Tokugawa Japan* (University of Tokyo Press, 1990), 185. Akai introduces the 1848 diary of a publisher who met with financial disaster when he produced an extremely unpopular Kuniyoshi triptych of turtles with faces like actors.

rather like independent film in the contemporary world—from which mainstream publishing could draw new ideas with less risk of failure. Once a new subject, such as landscape or historical themes, had been shown to meet wide approval, or a new technique, such as color printing or embossing, had entered the threshold of public demand, only then were these innovations incorporated into commercial printmaking. One of the ironies of the art historical view that sees surimono as a branch or outgrowth of *ukiyo-e* commercial prints, therefore, is that the direction of influence is so often precisely the opposite, with surimono propelling advances in commercial printmaking techniques and subject matter that gave the *ukiyo-e* print new life.

Nevertheless, though it is important to see surimono's role at the forefront of Japanese printmaking, it is also necessary to acknowledge the debts it owed to previous, commercial publications. At the most basic level, this involves the advancement of printing in Japan through its use as a commercial technology, and the possibilities this offered for the private application of its system and techniques. But more pointedly, if we seek the source of not only the advanced techniques Ushaku employed in making some of the finest early surimono, but also the model on which some of these images were based, we must look back to the commercial exchange of publications made in the seventeenth century. These were not, however, as for surimono later in the eighteenth century, primarily publications made in the city of Edo, but rather books and prints imported from the markets of late Ming and early Ching Dynasty China. Such works include albums of decorative writing papers, such as *Luoxuan biangu jianpu* (蘿軒變古箋譜 • “The Wisteria Album of Ancient and Modern Writing Paper Designs,” 1626) and *Shizhuzhai jianpu* (十竹齋箋譜 • “The Ten Bamboo Studio Album of Decorative Paper,” 1644), as well as the popular *Jiezi yuan hua zhuan* (芥子園畫傳 • “The Mustard Seed Garden Manual,” 1679, 1701), and single sheet prints that were used for letters or greeting cards. Among these

albums were standard black outline prints, but also some exquisite examples of multiple-color printing from woodblocks and embossing techniques. And like many surimono, the letter papers in particular often featured illustrations of simple but poetically allusive items, softly colored with tones. Such works entered the Japanese market through the trading post in Nagasaki, perhaps not coincidentally the area of Rantai's lordship, and likely circulated only to a limited extent among an elite audience.⁵²² Despite some arguments to the contrary,⁵²³ their influence on the emergence of the surimono genre itself is probably not direct in terms of function or format, as letter papers were utilized in a very different manner in China, with texts *later brushed* by the owner directly *over* the lightly printed images, which were typically *centered* on the page—although we can imagine that these elegant combinations of text and image, melding with the traditions of letter writing in Japan, were an inspiration. But the influence of early Chinese printmaking on surimono illustration, or, for that matter, late seventeenth-early eighteenth century illustration in general, can hardly be doubted, for these works inspired carvers and printers in Japan to try to emulate their techniques and appearance, particularly on privately printed works, where such experimentation was possible.

The three illustrated surimono examined closely in this section reveal a progression of text-image relationships, from simple decoration to structural

⁵²² For information on the Chinese book trade with Japan, see Peter Kornicki *The Book in Japan* (University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 298-300. The presence of these color printed works in Japan is suggested by several pieces of evidence, including book illustrations based on the *Mustard Seed Garden Manual* made before its reproduction in Japan in 1743 and 1748; the existence of a group of exquisite Chinese prints with color printing and embossing, brought back from Japan in 1693 by Englebert Kaempfer; and the initial experiments with color printing themselves, which emulate a Chinese style that was itself based on Ming painting and coloring, rather than painting styles in Japan. It is noteworthy that Kaempfer, who entered Japan through Nagasaki, describes not only the Chinese book import market, but also the Ōmura clan and its background in his *History of Japan* (Hotei Press, 2002), 226-227 and 140-141.

⁵²³ Tsuchichold: “undoubtedly prints of this kind were the prototypes of those exquisitely printed Japanese New Years’ greeting cards, the surimono.” See also Hillier, “Still-Life in Surimono,” 65 for a more balanced discussion.

integration to something more closely approximating the kind of complexity text-image relations would have in surimono at the maturity of the form. At the basic level is Kōka's 1710 "Plum and Lottery Prizes," in which images are not much more than substitutes for literary *dai*. If, for example, one replaced the drawing of the plum tree with the character "*ume*," the functioning of the work would hardly alter: the image here is merely a stand-in, a supplied personal impression, for what the character represents. As such, of course, it differs greatly from the character in operation, providing exact details of the trunk and flowers without ambiguity, whereas the character could only summon a general image, a composite of multiple images in fact. By drawing the plum tree, rather than writing the character for it, moreover, Kōka is able to provide a certain aesthetic, a particular view of the plum, with bold, thick lines for the trunk and dainty flowers above, that informs the viewer exactly what the plum means to him, in his impression of it at this time. The same holds true for the lottery prizes, with more information supplied in the image than the characters alone could communicate, and more specifics of style in relation to the objects, I would argue, than the characters in calligraphy could express. But in terms of their relations with the poetic texts, the images are yet simply thematic markers. They describe what is to come, preparing the readers for it, but what readers find is nothing much more than what they expected, poetry on the plum, or on the lottery, in general, not related to the specific image. There is a kind of simplicity and stability in this basic type of integration that is appealing, and perhaps even suitable for the occasion and the purpose of the print, but the relationship between the text and image is too general to make us re-examine them and explore their connections.

Somewhat more complex is Rantai's 1710 "Treasure Ship." Here, the image does not relate as directly to the poems, but is one, or perhaps two steps removed, connecting with them through familiar allusions. Unlike Kōka's print, in other words,

the poetry is not about treasure ships—but it is, through the association of the *Shichifukujin* with the ship, about the Seven Gods of Good Fortune. Yet once again, not directly, for only their material symbols are mentioned in the poetry, never the Seven Gods themselves. It is perfectly possible to imagine a reader—a latter day archaeologist, perhaps, who had broken the code of language, but not of cultural associations, or a child, excessively literal in understanding—who could take in every word of the print, yet never connect it to the Seven Gods. The absence of the Seven Gods in all but association in fact matches well their existence as part of the cultural imaginary, as expressed too by the emptiness of the ship in the image. For them to exist, we must summon them up, by following the trail of allusions. This factor implies that text and image here have a shared role—a symbiotic relationship quite unlike that in Kōka's print—assisting one another to get at the hidden subject of the piece. Granted, an astute reader could quickly pick up these allusions from the poetry alone, but image here underlines and supports poetry in making the references all but impossible to miss. Moreover, the image has an additional, practical purpose to play, so that it would not be possible to substitute a title such as “Treasure Ship” in place of its picture. The most likely progression for the creation of the piece, then, was from this standard image to its first level association, the Gods, and from there to a second level, their material symbols, which form the topics of the poetry, and from there to the various associations of these objects themselves. A reader, receiving the print at the New Year, could take pleasure in tracing this process backwards, and animating the hidden subject, just as the picture of the ship itself was thought to come to life and create blessings for its user.

Senshū's “Inari Shrine” lacks the levels of cohesiveness and internal unity that makes Rantai's print a special work, so suitable for its holiday purpose. But the “Inari Shrine” represents a yet more advanced relationship between text and image, one in

which picture and poem are no longer tightly linked or even mutual partners, but have to some degree become independent players, each capable of making a statement on its own. The process here, as in Rantai's print, operates through association. "First Day of the Horse" is a day for celebration at Inari Shrines, so the artist has drawn a suitable image of the shrine gates, set among trees and lines of mist. The scene is apparently early morning, the shrine uninhabited. For the poets on this print, however, "First Horse" is primarily an occasion for amorous play in the pleasure quarters nearby the Inari Shrine in Kyōto, and this becomes the topic of their poetry. There is an apparent innocence in the image here, as though the artist were unaware of the poetry's bent, and this simple, literal view of the shrine is that transferred to viewers at their first impression. Quickly, however, the poetry introduces new material, new interpretations of "horse," "Kyō" and "gates" for example, that make viewers rapidly reevaluate their initial assumptions, most likely in surprise and laughter. In retrospect, one may notice that the "gates" were not as innocent as they initially appeared, especially after their erotic implications are made explicit in the poetry, making one reconsider the image, and its artist as well. This sort of sudden shift from one level of signification to another is experienced as humor, and leads the viewer, as in Rantai's print, to retrace the steps, the "set up" of image and the "punch lines" of text, lingering over the work and re-experiencing it. In both Rantai's surimono and this one, we can thus see that text-image relationships make these single works multiple, allowing them to operate at different levels of signification, either literal-associative or before-after, thus giving them an impression of wit and depth. These are not yet the most advanced examples of text-image interplay in surimono, but they point the way ahead, away from decoration and mere mirroring, to the more complicated sorts of interaction that will transform the genre.

The Aesthetics of Early Surimono, II: Texts and the Construction of Works

The addition of illustration, and the development of printing techniques that made these images stand out—that “made the world resound” as the 1771 account had it—allowed the content and functioning of surimono to become more complex. But images were yet, as seen by the paltry 20% of the Rantai collection that contain them, still something of a rarity in early surimono. In most of the prints that contain them, moreover, illustrations are either unsigned (seven), or signed by one of the poets appearing on the surimono itself (five), with only three cases where the contributor of the artwork did not take part in the print poetically—and even they likely considered themselves primarily poets.⁵²⁴ In a sense, this characteristic of early surimono made them truer reflections of the abilities of poets in particular groups or cliques, meaning that a superb image stood out all the more, as an example of what these poets were capable of. But in another respect, the designing of images by amateurs held back the potential for the development of more elaborate kinds of text-image relations, a more complex structuring of surimono that would make them more than just overgrown *saitanchō*.

Simplistic images, such as these *manzai* dancers by a gate pine in a 1713 surimono by Jokō (Figure 20), were sometimes so unobtrusive as to almost be an afterthought, noticed only once the poetry had been read—though in this case it was likely that the image acted as a kind of frontispiece, seen just after the ornate title in the process of unfolding.⁵²⁵ Still, were its visibility not enforced by such a position,

⁵²⁴ Kōka, Hōya (Jokō), Zenkaku, Seisei and Banchiku all sign the artwork on prints on which they appear. Such a hypothesis is far from proven, but it is reasonable to consider unsigned images as the creation of the print’s primary commissioner. The three “artists” who do not appear on prints they sign are Kyūshin (no.46), Ranseki (no.64) and Kien (no.70). Ranseki may possibly be Issekisai Ranzan.

⁵²⁵ It is important to keep in mind the manner of reception of these prints. Surimono arrived folded, and the process of unfolding was often one of a gradual unraveling of the print’s content, as with a picture scroll. In this case, considering the folds, the title was on the outside, the lightly printed image just within, as in the manner of a *haikai* book with cover, frontispiece and poetry thereafter. This aspect too highlights the lingering influence of the *saitanchō*.

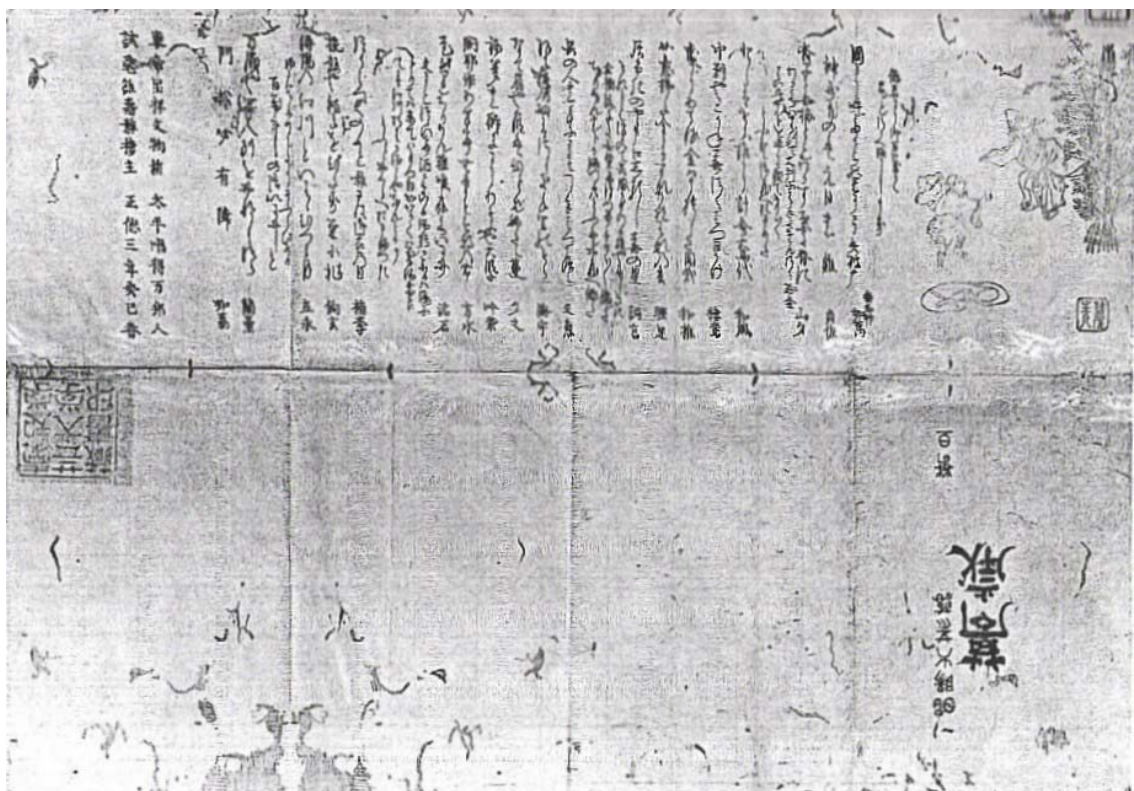


Figure 20: An *ōbōshozenshiban* surimono for the New Year, 1713, commissioned by Jokō with an illustration of *manzai* dancers before a gate pine signed Hōya shūjin. Aichi University of Education.

this lightly printed image would be easy enough to overlook. Like the style of the illustration itself, moreover, its relation to the text was direct, literal, and unelaborated. The verses here mention both *manzai*—literally “ten thousand years,” an auspicious New Year’s show put on by itinerant performers before the gates of important homes and in public spaces—and the *kadomatsu*, or gate pine, but do not substantially deepen, challenge or alter the meaning of these New Year symbols for the viewer. Granted, there is a homey pleasure in such simplicity that is in keeping with the holiday, far more than the self-centered sophistication in Senshū’s surimono for “First Horse,” but for the same reasons this print is one that actually comes closer to a greeting card than a poetry presentation sheet. We can see the warm but sentimental aspects of its approach most clearly in Jokō’s auspicious closing words, which, although inscribed as a verse would be, are not even in a poetic form: “Wherever the gate-pine is, there will be happiness.”⁵²⁶ Here is an example where the New Year does seem more important than poetry, perhaps because, as we will see, Jokō’s connection to the poetic world was looser than most. Nevertheless, this type of one-to-one text-image relationship is typical of that found on most illustrated early surimono.

The addition of illustration, I mean to suggest with this example, was not *of itself* sufficient to make surimono anything more than decorative, or anything other than just a seasonal greeting. Illustration often helped to thematically focus a print and organize its poetic content, but there were other ways to achieve cohesion and structure than just pictures. More significantly, to discuss images as though they were primary, in artistic importance as well as in the order of production, is to miss seeing the vital role poetics and individual aesthetics played in determining the form of a surimono. It is poetry, I mean to say, that dictated the type of illustration and text-

⁵²⁶ “Kadomatsu kanarazu aru kotobuki.” 門松必有寿

image relationship proper to it, or even if illustration were necessary or appropriate at all. As the sixty unillustrated works in the Rantai collection testify, illustration was not initially deemed a very important part of content, and some poetic groups, in fact, continued for the remainder of the century to do without it, letting poetry “do the talking” as it were. But the goal of this section is not simply to examine unillustrated surimono descriptively, but to look at the kinds of textual content, and textual organization, that were important for the development of the genre. Early surimono included a number of advancements made through non-pictorial forms, while poetry, throughout the history of the form, remained the primary determining factor as to what formats, calligraphy, images and even styles of printing were appropriate as its physical manifestation in the surimono print. One can’t deny many ill fits of form and content, as in 1708’s “First Horse,” but over time and through experiment, form and content had a way of finding the means for unification, and such unity, not simply the addition of illustration—though illustration does play a leading role in this unification—holds the key to understanding the development of surimono.

Since I have begun with an illustrated work by Jokō, let me introduce one of his other, non-illustrated surimono, which was nevertheless influential for future uses of the form. It has been conjectured that Jokō, whose identity is largely unknown, may have been one of Rantai’s leading retainers, who became involved in *haikai* with him, perhaps at his master’s invitation, thus explaining the parallel courses of Rantai and Jokō’s poetic careers.⁵²⁷ Whether this was the case or not, Jokō seems to have been enamored of the surimono form, and commissioned at least three of his own, while appearing with Rantai on many others. Perhaps because he was not as deeply enmeshed in the *haikai* world as most poets, Jokō’s first two commissioned surimono, including the “Manzai” print above, tend to veer somewhat off course in comparison

⁵²⁷ See Okamoto in Kira, ed. (2002), 78.

to the usual *saitanchō* inspired pieces, freely bringing in non-poetic elements such as Jokō's final blessing in "Manzai." Much more dramatic than the latter work, however, which still follows the basic layout of the *saitanchō*, even if it utilizes only half the *zenshi* paper and emphasizes a large, ornate title, is Jokō's 1712 "*Utai hajime*" (謡始・"First *Noh* Chants of the New Year," Figure 21). This unique work incorporates poetry into the structure of a *noh* program format, with titles in large calligraphy above and poetry on the same themes below. Moreover, although utilizing the typical paper size and quality of *kaishi*, Jokō's work, unusual among early surimono, was not intended to be seen folded, but rather formally demanded that it be read in full, open form, much like a *waka kaishi*. On this broad, open plane, Jokō does not cram tight lines of poetry with dozens of poets, but rather creates a visual effect of plentitude and leisure—in keeping with a wealthy man's sponsoring of a day of *noh* chants—by leaving large sections of the paper blank. As this work apparently functioned as an invitation to an actual gathering, it must have been planned and worked out far in advance of the occasion, with a meeting of poets to compose suitable verses, or Jokō's call for submissions on the set themes. Like the best surimono, akin to Rantai's "Treasure Ship," this work reveals originality and inspiration in an overall conception that melds poetry formally and thematically with a separate, cultural structure, thereby allowing for a meaningful exercise of wit and imagination.

Jokō's "*Utai hajime*" opens with this title (謡始), followed by the names of *noh* plays, much in the order of a typical program, beginning with the ritual "Okina Sanbasō," then "Takasago," "Tamura," "Tōboku," "Chōryō," and "Yōrō."⁵²⁸ Two comic plays, "Suehirogari" and "Fuku no kami," are listed separately under the

⁵²⁸ Jokō's program follows the standard structure of a day of *noh*, beginning with the conventional opener (翁三番叟・*Okina Sanbasō*), followed by a God Play (高砂・*Takasago*), a Warrior Play (田村・*Tamura*), a Woman Play (東北・*Tōboku*), a Mental Derangement Play (張良・*Chōryō*), and, listed as a "Shūgen" (celebratory closer), *Yōrō* [養老].



Figure 21: *Utai hajime* (謡初). An *ōbōshozenshiban* surimono for New Year 1712, in the form of a program of *noh* chants. Commissioned by Juseirō shūjin [Jokō]. Aichi University of Education.

heading *kyōgen*, followed by the date.⁵²⁹ Under the title of each play are one to three verses, related to its content. Jokō's stately opening verse for *Okina Sanbasō*, although obliterated at bottom, seems to be a suitable comparison of the fleeting and eternal, taking the pines of the *noh* stage as its symbol:

<i>Hatsu tori ya</i>	First bird--
<i>Oyoso sennen</i>	For a thousand years
<i>Hashira [tate?]</i>	These pillars [have stood?] ⁵³⁰

For *Takasago*, the return of spring is made to coincide with the entry of the *waki*, commencing the action of the play:

<i>Kangen no</i>	The music concludes
<i>Hatete hatsu haru</i>	And early spring
<i>Iri hijiri</i>	Enters with a saintly priest ⁵³¹

The poem for *Tamura* puns on the lead character's name, Sakanoue Tamuramaro, taking the voice of the *waki* after his *michiyuki* and its material from the play's scenery, a flower-strewn Kyōto temple:

<i>Kitaru saku</i>	To the flowery hilltops
<i>Hana no miyako no</i>	Of Sakanoue's blossoming capital
<i>Saka no ue</i>	I have come ⁵³²

The woman play *Tōboku* receives feminine imagery, referring to its *shite*, Izumi Shikibu, and her professed love of plum blossoms:

<i>Tsuki wo mayu</i>	The moon arches like an eyebrow
<i>Mikka no on-yo</i>	On this night of the third day--
<i>Mume no hana</i>	Over the plum blossoms ⁵³³

Chōryō, a play often referenced in eighteenth century popular prints, receives

⁵²⁹ 狂言一末広かり, 福の神.

⁵³⁰ 初鳥や凡千年柱[立て?]

⁵³¹ 管弦の果て初春入聖.

⁵³² 来るさく花の都も坂のうへ.

⁵³³ 月は眉三日の御夜むめに花.

the most blatantly comic treatment in this piece, with the Chinese sage transformed into a hairdresser:

<i>Kamiyui mo</i>	The hairdresser too
<i>Hashi ni chiremude</i>	Late to the bridge
<i>Hatsu hi kage</i>	At dawn's first light ⁵³⁴

The transformation from humble *maejite* to regal *nochijite* in many *noh* plays seems to be the subject for *Yōrō*, in which the *shite* is revealed as the god of the famous falls of this name:

<i>Shiwasu wa</i>	The last month
<i>Suzume akete</i>	Is a sparrow, the New Year
<i>Tsuru no hane</i>	The wings of a crane ⁵³⁵

The *kyōgen* end the piece with a suitably light note:

<i>Tsuki kara no</i>	From the moon
<i>Daimyō moji ya</i>	A great lord's letters--
<i>Hana no sen</i>	The flowery fan ⁵³⁶

In this manner, the structure of *Jokō*'s *surimono* as an actual *noh* program organizes the work into much more than just a flat, linear succession of poetic *dai*. Instead, the viewer moves through the *jo-ha-kyū* tempos of a *noh* program, with each section integrated into the work as a whole, holding a particular place and meaningful relationship to the other parts, with set moods in fixed places, a sense of opening, development and closure.

⁵³⁴ 髪結も橋にちれむて初日影. The meaning of the second line is not clear to me. One of the stipulations of *Kosekko*, the sage who dropped his sandal from a bridge for *Chōryō* to recover, is that they meet again at the bridge at the break of dawn. Here, this is made into the first light of the year. The transformation of the hero to a hairdresser may be through "hashi," which means not only bridge, but also simple sticks to hold the hair, used in place of expensive *kanzashi* by lower classes. Perhaps the first rays of dawn, drawn conventionally with a fanlike array of lines, are being compared to the sticks in a woman's hair.

⁵³⁵ 師走は雀明けて鶴の羽. The end of the year is busy like a sparrow; the New Year magnificent like a crane's wings.

⁵³⁶ 月からの大名文字や花の扇. *Suehirogari* tells the story of the hapless *Tarō Kaja*, who is sent to *Kyōto* to purchase a fan, but due to the poetic term (the "spreading out at the end" of the title) his master uses to reference this object, ends up buying an umbrella.

A work quite similar in conception to Jokō's 1712 "Utai hajime," which like that piece was to anticipate a whole sub-genre of surimono production, was the *Kyōhō roku haikai ryakureki* (享保六俳諧略曆・"Abbreviated Haikai Calendar for 1721") of Rokkasai Seisei, a poet also known as Rokkasai Suikoku 六花斎晴星 (1682-1734). I have counted this work (Figure 22) among the fifteen illustrated surimono in the Rantai collection, as it does contain a small vignette of a carved table with a calendar just below the title, but in fact the organization of the work is not based on the illustration, but rather on the layout of an actual abbreviated calendar. Such calendars listed the large and short months of the year, which varied from one annual cycle to the next, as well as any extra, intercalary months, necessitated by the discrepancy between lunar and solar patterns. Here, the characters for "large" and "small" appear in black circles at the top of the print, on either side of the illustrated table, while beneath them are the related numbers for the months, with a *haikai* poem or two and additional calendar information for each.⁵³⁷

Like Jokō's "Utai hajime," then, this piece matches verses with set themes that derive from outside of poetry itself, here the months of the year, mapping out the coming seasonal cycle with poetry. Such arrangements let the viewer know what to expect, giving poetry a meaningful place thematically, much like *dai* or subject markers, but here with an internal structure that was comprehensive and self-explanatory to the viewer, and with an added element of practicality as well. Also unusual in this work, again like Jokō's, was the utilization of paper. Here, a full panel of the usual, folded *kaishi* is organized vertically, facilitating the actual use of the item

⁵³⁷ Curiously, the ninth month is without a poem, though two poems are devoted to the second, sixth and eleventh months. The seventh month also has two poems, one for the 'large' seventh month, and the second for the 'small' intercalary seventh.



Figure 22: *Haikai ryakureki* (俳諧略歴). A half-*ōbōshozenshiban* surimono, vertically oriented (*tate-nagaban*) for New Year, 1721. Commissioned by Rokkasai Seisei. Aichi University of Education.

as a wall hanging. By taking the form of a useful, daily life item, moreover, this work thereby ensured a higher probability that it would be kept and displayed for the year, its poetry perhaps read in conjunction with the months as they passed. This functional value transformed a one time, seasonal presentation, relevant only for a short time in the mind of the recipient, into a prolonged relationship between the recipient and the poet, Seisei, who composed all of the verses on the print. It is hardly a surprise, therefore, that Seisei's work was not a single experiment, but the first in what was to be a long relationship between surimono and calendars. In fact, two other prints in the Rantai collection also take the form of calendars, while the later private production of calendars, as we will see in the next chapter, radically transformed the genre of surimono.

These "program" surimono, taking their inspiration from a prototype other than the anthology page, were almost as important as illustrated works in helping surimono to develop into a kind of print suited to its format. In each of the examples viewed, and in others to be seen later, such as surimono invitations and board games, these "program" pieces radically altered the approach of poets to the layout and orientation of the poetic sheet, leading them to creative new kinds of organization. In essence, these works overran standard cultural forms with *haikai* poetry, appropriating external structures as poetic, and thus providing a new place for poetry to fit within the construction of daily life. Where they all to some degree fail, however, is in straying from the use of surimono as a poetic presentation sheet. When surimono materially becomes a concert program, a calendar or a board game, it can no longer summon the aura of the classic poetic presentation sheet, and the nuances that come with it. These works all appear as clever and playful, but as somewhat lesser productions for this reason. The addition of illustration, by contrast, did not of itself transform the work's appearance as a poetic presentation, with the familiar lines of calligraphy maintained

on at least part of the print, and a different part designated for illustration, or image included with verse as a kind of pictorial *dai*. Not only did such illustrated works have a tradition of presentation sheets with *shita-e* drawings or other decorative effects from which to take meaning, but illustration also, consequently, allowed works to refer to external structures without those structures taking over the work. But more importantly, in respect to the development of the genre, “program” surimono were necessarily more limited in creativity than illustration, which could summon up any standard cultural form, not just the social uses of works on paper. It is because of these factors that illustration provided surimono’s primary, and most enduring method of achieving internal order and artistic complexity, ultimately altering not only physical layout and structural integration, but the semiotic functioning of the content as well. By this last I mean that in works where text and image are more fully integrated, the meanings one derives from the work are not based on text or image alone, or even the two in sum, but on another order of signification that rises from their interaction. Examples of this type will be explored in subsequent chapters.

But for this very reason, to view only the development of illustration on surimono in isolation from poetry would be a grave error. The growth of illustration to larger and more colorful forms on these prints is not of itself important, but significant only in relation to the poetry and signifying structure of the work. Moreover, as an inspirational force behind both layout and illustration, the manner of the poetry itself appearing on surimono was of utmost consequence for the form these works would take. In Rantai’s “Treasure Ship,” Jokō’s “Utai hajime” or Senshū’s “Inari Shrine,” the style of the verses, emphasizing cleverness and associative layers of meaning, pointed the way to uses of the surimono format equally imbued with these qualities of *share*. For poetry with a more austere bent, however, as in Ransetsu’s 1702 “Seibo,” such facile cleverness would have been entirely out of place. Likewise,

illustration, in anything other than multiple, small patches, would be inconceivable for a work like the varied 1708 “First Horse.” We can equally say, then, not only that images help to organize poetry, but also that coherent poetry is a prerequisite for illustration, and likewise that images not only direct the focus of poetry, but also take their own direction from its nature. We are dealing not with cause and effect per se, but with the construction of elements of a work based on corresponding aesthetic principles—though for poets, admittedly, that sense of aesthetics does rise primarily from poetics.

I do not mean to suggest here an obligatory, natural or inevitable one-to-one correspondence between poetry and illustration, for if this were the case, we would expect to find exactly the same kinds of illustrations and text-image relationships on all works in the Rantai collection with a similar sense of poetics. What I do mean to say, however, is that certain kinds of poetry are best suited to certain kinds of material formats, including size, shape and quality of paper, decoration and images, and though they do not always, necessarily take these, when they do find a matching correspondence in physical form, the work appears as integrated and successful. If the heart of the poetic experience is thought to be humor and wit, we expect an equally light approach to illustration, with an equivalent effect; if ethereal beauty, then pictorial style and subject to match. But beyond the obvious matters of subject and style, even the functioning of images should correspond to the techniques of the poetry, so if poems are constructed of layers of allusion, we expect to find a kind of illustration that also alludes to something other than itself, and if puns and wordplay are central, an image that is equally shifting and double. Moreover, though this is something of a trickier proposition, I believe that certain kinds of poetry, or at least constructions of poetry in a print, call out for illustration more than others. This is perhaps most obvious from the negative side in the varied 1708 “First Horse,” almost

impossible to meaningfully illustrate, and from the positive in Senshū's "Inari Shrine," which, without the anchoring weight of the illustration, would be so light-headed as to seem inconsequential. One potential error in approaching early surimono, therefore, is to assume that illustration merely suggests a richer patron, and the lack thereof an inability to pay for this luxury. The example of Ōmura Rantai himself clearly tells us otherwise. There are many reasons why a work might lack illustration, including the desire of the commissioner to have poetry be the sole focus, the sheer diversity and want of thematic coherence in the poetry, the lack of connection to an artist with the skills to add suitable illustration, or the aesthetics of the poetry itself. But money, we can flatly say, was never one of them.

As a test case, let me describe the content of some "plain" surimono, with a sense of poetics in keeping with their unadorned style. Many examples of this latter tendency can be found among so-called "countryside surimono," works with poetry by the groups following and associated with Kagami Shikō (1665-1731) and Shida Yaba (1662-1740), disciples of Bashō who consolidated rural poets in much the same manner as the Sentokumon in the cities. These poets, believing themselves to be following the "true style" (*shōfū*) of Bashō,⁵³⁸ favored poetry with a direct, unelaborated approach to the simple materials of daily life. Just as one might expect from such a sense of poetics, their surimono were equally straightforward and unembellished, typically printed in *sumi* on ordinary half-sheets of Mino paper, without decoration or illustration—though often including the practical touch of calendar information for the year, an important part of rural life. According to Louise Virgin, "plain surimono of the 'traditional' horizontal format remained the standard [despite elaborations in the cities] in the conservative Teimon circles of provincial

⁵³⁸ The unintended irony of the countryside poets' *shōfū* (正風 • "correct style") is that it precisely wasn't *shōfū* (蕉風 • "Bashō style"), being a simplification and hollowing out of meaning of Bashō's ideal of *karumi*, transforming it into a focus on the mundane and workaday aspects of life.

Japan where a folksy, simplified Bashō style had been marketed by Bashō's students."⁵³⁹ Virgin, however, attributes the lack of illustration to finances: "because of cost considerations most provincial style prints were not illustrated."⁵⁴⁰ Yet one must ask, why would the addition of illustration on the key-block, assuming the image were drawn by a group member and not commissioned from a professional artist, increase expense? In fact, entirely unlike modern printing, on which Virgin seems to be basing her logic, there was no more difficulty in reproducing a picture than a calligraphic character with a woodblock—indeed, in most cases quite a bit less—so cost should not at all have increased for a monochrome illustration, carved on the same block as text.⁵⁴¹ In fact, as though to contradict her own statement, Virgin mentions that some "country-style surimono" included illustrated wrappers, and that one of these wrappers for a surimono from the 1770s included an image by the immensely popular Chinese-style artist Sō Shiseki 宗史跡 (1712-1786), who lived in Edo. It was not for reasons of expense, therefore, that the main body of these "countryside surimono" was kept free of illustration. Nor was it for want of technological ability (the skills of block carvers) for many of these works were produced in Kyōto, by the publisher Tachibana Jihei 橘治兵衛 (dates unknown), who by mid-century was challenging the Izutsuya for supremacy in Kyōto's printing market.⁵⁴² Rather, we should see the relationship between poetry and the form of surimono it took as one of aesthetics (poetics).

⁵³⁹ (1992), 16

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid, 18

⁵⁴¹ Consider, for example, the two halves of Rantai's "Treasure Ship," text and image. Preparing the fine calligraphy was clearly more time consuming and difficult than the relatively straight, simplistic lines of the ship and waves.

⁵⁴² Prints with the Tachibana-ya seal can be seen in the Aichi Kyōiku Daigaku collection, but these were works gathered after Rantai's death. In Okamoto's catalogue they are no.78-80. Also of note are no.76-77 and 81-82, which carry the marks of publishers in Mino, one of the centers of the countryside Bashō movement.

As might be expected, surimono in the “country-style” did not make it into the hands of the wit-loving Rantai and his Edo circle, whose aesthetics were at the opposite end of the spectrum, and so are not represented in his collection. Moreover, because they are visually less interesting works, these “countryside surimono” are not often reproduced, but one of this movement’s early publications, dating to 1732, has been an object of some focus (Figure 23).⁵⁴³ Although Louise Virgin, including various formats in her definition, refers to this work as a “surimono,” it does not meet my definition as such, for it is laid out in a very different manner from the poetic presentation sheet, with close, vertical folds that allow it to be closed up in accordion manner as a book of the *orihon* (“folding book”) variety.⁵⁴⁴ Nevertheless, though I am hesitant to include books in the surimono format, as multiple sheet works do not have the kind of special focus and immediacy required of a poetic presentation, when fully opened, this work does form a single, continuous sheet, and in fact, the folds demand its viewing as such, with breaks across sections and calendar/almanac charts. Still, as a work of fairly ordinary printing, on unexceptional paper, this print, like others of the country-style, must be located at the fringes of the surimono genre. The significance of such a work for my argument here is not its rich qualities, of which it has few, or inventiveness, for it seems fairly standard,⁵⁴⁵ but rather what it tells us about the relationship between the poetics of verses and the forms of the works that carry them. In this strand of *haikai*/surimono practice, the aesthetics of ordinary simplicity and unelaborated directness in poetry find their perfect counterpart in the plain prints. Or,

⁵⁴³ The vast majority of “country-style surimono” date to the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A representative collection of them can be found in the Wataya Bunko of Tenri Library. See also *Haikai surimono zufū* (Seishōdō, 2002).

⁵⁴⁴ One detects here a strategic advantage of the “ichimaizuri” definition. See Virgin (1992), 17, and Kira (1989), 38 and 48. Kira suitably refers to this work as a “saitanchō.” In some ways, therefore, it is not a fair comparison to surimono, but does stand as representative of countryside *haikai* publication.

⁵⁴⁵ Virgin (1992) in fact compares the 1732 example with another from 1797, which takes the same calendar format and a very similar layout. See Kira (1989), 38 and 49, which sets up the comparison.

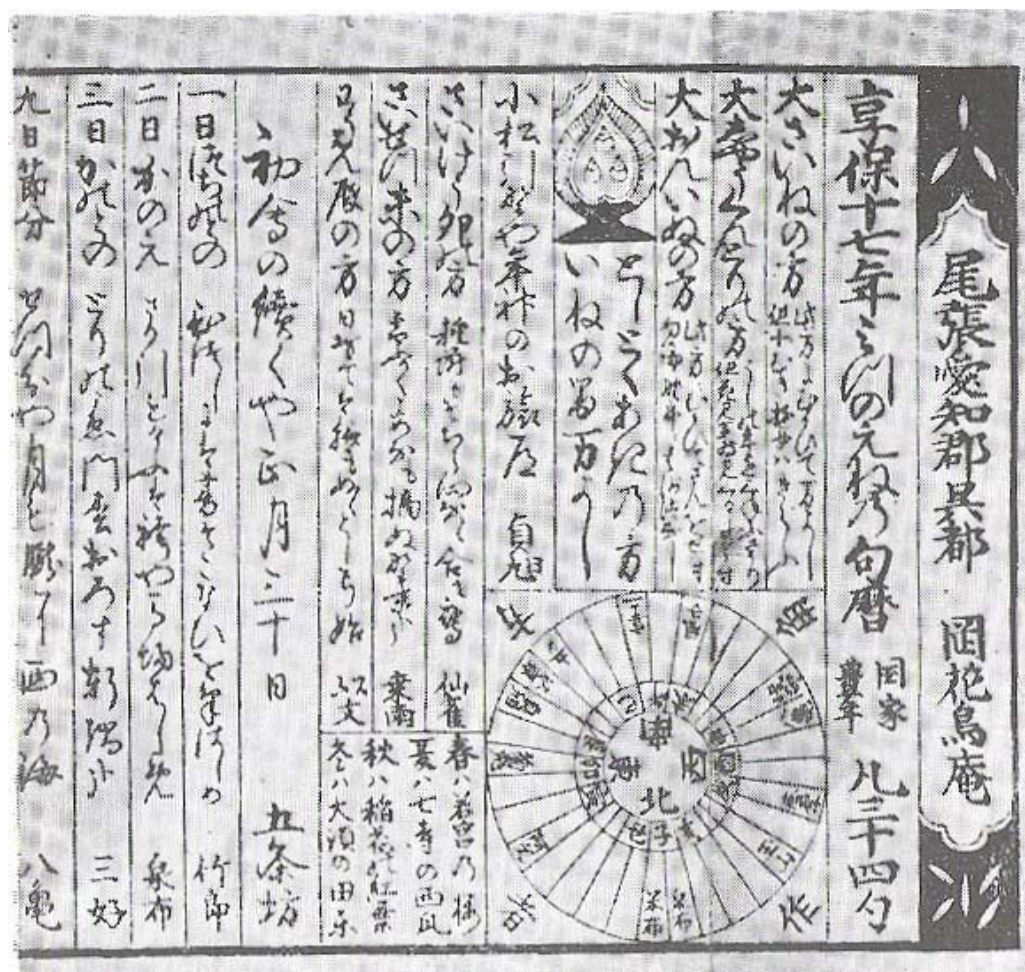


Figure 23: Owari Aichigun Kureto Okabanachōan (尾張愛知郡呉都 岡花鳥庵). An orihon saitanchō “poetry calendar” (句歴) for 1732, with 34 verses related to the structure of the annual calendar. Commissioned by Okabanchōan Teikyoku. Tōendō Bunko.

to state the matter in reverse, the homely impression given by the print is reflected in its content, which is little more than calendar information, given in poetic form. For example:

*Hatsu-kai no
Hiraki ya shōgatsu
Sanjūnichi*

The initial poetry meetings
Open the first month
With its thirty days⁵⁴⁶

This approach to the content of surimono advances the formula worked out for its development in my opening section on image, where I stated that it was the establishment of illustration as an independent entity, partly through technical advances, that led to the growing complexity of surimono's text-image relations, and so the advancement of its artistic depth. The focus on form-content relations suggests that certain kinds of texts seek out corresponding kinds of physical manifestations, sometimes finding them with relative ease, sometimes trying out various possibilities until the suitable form is found. Such an idea, in fact, has its own counterpart in one discussed in the previous section, that the challenge for surimono in its development was to abandon its *saitanchō* content, developed in relation to an earlier format, and thus grow into the possibilities offered by its new *kaishi* format. Format and poetry, layout and content, image and text, this is now to say, to weld the sections of this chapter together, work towards one another, finding appropriate meeting ground(s) through interaction, experiment, and compromise. We will see another example of this postulation, yet more clearly, in the later development of the *kyōka* surimono, which stumbled initially through existing formats, like ill-fit hand-me-downs, until finally finding the form that best suited the nature of its poetry, the *shikishi*-like *kakuban*. But for the present discussion, what this idea suggests is that the development of surimono was closely influenced by the kinds of texts appearing on

⁵⁴⁶ 初会の開きや正月三十日.

these prints, or, to put it another way, that the individual senses of poetics among the commissioners of early surimono helped direct this form in new directions. We have glimpsed this already in Senshū's "Inari Shrine," in which the high-spirited poetry, relying on shifts in words and associations, a doubling of signification through puns and allusions, has its counterpart in the image, which likewise, though its relation to the text, takes a sudden turn and reveals itself to be something other than what it on the surface appeared. Kōka's "Plum and Lottery Prizes," by contrast, summons images as light and decorative as its verse. The pattern of surimono's development then is neither one of continuous growth, nor even of starts and stops as I previously described it, but more accurately a reflection of the variety of poetic approaches, each of which takes a form appropriate to it, though its own sense of aesthetics.

But I believe there can be little doubt that some forms of poetry were more suited to the format of surimono as presentation poetry sheet than others. As moving as Ransetsu and Hyakuri's *mitsumono* with Hyōka is in their 1702 work, this set of linked verses simply doesn't require the surimono format to function, nor is it even particularly aided, except perhaps in emphasis, by being printed on a large sheet. This is not at all to say that the Ransetsu *saitan* fails as a New Year gift among a closed circle of friends, for it is, in fact, the most intimate and emotional surimono I have read for this project. But the piece relies on its poetry, not its format, to have such an effect. It is not impossible to imagine a work of this sort illustrated, in a manner as understated, subtle and symbolic as the poetry, but bright colors and the sparkle of precious metals would be entirely out of place. In point of fact, there will later develop another kind of format for *haikai* works of such austere and serious a character, yet the large, bold statement of the *kaishi* format dominating early surimono was not it. The most successful early works were those that took command of this expanded, single surface and employed it to means in keeping with its grandeur, such

as Rantai's "Treasure Ship" or Jokō's "Noh Program," both of which are surimono with a sense of purpose and completeness, using only as much of the sheet as necessary, and organizing it meaningfully and cohesively. Not coincidentally, each of these works contains poetry with a sense of wit, learning and playful allusiveness in keeping with their imaginative utilizations of format—which can consequently be seen as the overflowing of their poetic energies onto other, non-standard forms. It is not too much of an exaggeration, in fact, to say that the large format of early surimono favored poetry with both a sense of pomp and classicism, as in the erudite, layered allusions of Kikaku and his followers, and a lively, light sense of play, such as that of the Sentoku poets. Partly, of course, bright, bubbling poetry was in keeping with the festive spirit of the New Year holiday, and allusions to the literary past attuned to its deep sense of time and timelessness, but these approaches also better met the size, decorative and structural possibilities of the one sheet form. The development of surimono, therefore, should be read not only as an enhancement of content, structure and function through illustration, moving from *saitanchō* to *kaishi*, but also as a sifting through of poetry to find the kinds of poetics suitable for the *kaishi* format, and a similar exploration of imagery to locate those possibilities best corresponding to these poetic ingredients.

Conclusion: Evaluating the Nature and Importance of Early Haikai Surimono

Based on previously established formats and practices, the genre of surimono seems to have become standardized fairly quickly, judging from the regularity of samples from the early eighteenth century. Moreover, close examination of these early works reveals some variety in layout, content and usage, but overall, far more uniformity. Surimono's basis in *saitanchō* is quite apparent in the regular lines of poetry, close together on the page, with poet's name at bottom, exactly like any haikai

anthology of the time. Moreover the size and format of these pieces, imitating the *kaishi* presentation sheet, are virtually identical, all using full sheets (*zenshi*), in most cases folded and oriented horizontally. The appropriation of these previously existing forms, which were created in response to particular sets of historical and literary requirements, thus had lasting repercussions on the development of surimono. The renga *kaishi* format was in fact well suited to haikai surimono in emphasizing the group nature of these productions, as well as the connection of this genre to elegant poetic traditions. By organizing the poetry on surimono in a style established for renga, the designers of these prints stressed the group as a cohesive body, rather than any particular poet, a point formally represented in the regularly sized, evenly spaced calligraphy. The inclusion of a variety of poets, likewise, invited active participation in the group and its publications, creating deeper solidarity. The large format, which reinforced these tendencies for group participation, also conveyed a sense of grandeur and importance, combining with the rich paper to summon up images of those presentation sheets traditionally dedicated to shrines and emperors. Such a format was in many ways ideal for the purposes of the poetry groups, competing for status and recognition.

But these advantages of format also limited surimono as a genre, for some decades restricting its uses. The sheer number of poems on most prints, for example, meant that it was difficult for the interaction between text and image to rise above certain basic kinds of relations, such as generic seasonal imagery to complement the poems, though in rare cases, where poems were thematically focused and images more than decorative, advanced types of interplay can be found. Only when surimono with fewer poems were made later in the eighteenth century, however, did the full potential for the kind of vibrant and complex text-image interactions that electrify nineteenth century surimono begin to be realized. Large format and group participation likewise

resulted in diminished possibilities for personalized content and individual control over production that smaller formats were later to bring. Though this was certainly in keeping with the purposes of the poetry groups, the kind of heated individual competition for cleverness and beauty of design that developed after the *egoyomi* exchanges of 1765-66 seems present only in a less intense form in most early surimono. Innovations and experiments were certainly not lacking, as has been seen, but rather took place under the name of the work's leader, and were generally for the enhancement of his or her group's reputation among its patrons. Therefore illustrations, when added, were typically by members themselves, amateur painters, but whose work represented the *actual* talents of the group. Only after the *egoyomi* exchanges would the commissioning of professional artists become the standard practice. Finally, the large, folded sheet, which was typically mailed to its recipient, was not as suited to person-to-person exchanges, lacking the immediacy of later, small, unfolded formats. These allowed for the introduction of a riddle aspect to surimono, and thereby for the experience of a flash of immediate, intuitive understanding between giver and recipient on its resolution, a personal interaction more pronounced than in the delivered *kaishi*. These limitations in no way diminish the importance and interest of early eighteenth century surimono, but point at a form that has not yet realized its full potential, its format and nature of its content not yet perfectly aligned.

The unitary format of early surimono, in sum, gave poets certain advantages with its size, historical connotations and resulting grandeur, but these very characteristics also served to constrict utilizations and content. The large format favored certain kinds of poetry and illustration, as well as certain formal and structural relations between the two. In the Rantai collection, the layout of text and image is still quite various, with images sometimes serving as frontispieces, before the text,

sometimes as pictorial *dai*, scattered within the text, and sometimes as separate entities, in their own panel, divided from the text. With the development of color woodblock printing technology, and the establishment of the image as an individual player in the signifying processes of the print, illustrations would increasingly come to take their own place on surimono, however, distinct of text, a movement seen to a limited extent already in Rantai's "Treasure Ship" or Senshū's "Inari Shrine." Such formal separation, which was to become the standard and hallmark of Edo *haikai* surimono later in the century, maintained text and image as distinct elements in the signifying process, sometimes with interesting interrelations, but never full integration. The *saitanchō*-style regular lines of calligraphy, which were not formally harmonized in any way with the images or content, also led to such a division. Not until the surimono of Buson and his school introduced a new model for the layout of surimono (*haiga*) could the full possibilities for formal text-image integration begin to be explored, including the expressive uses of calligraphy.

Nevertheless, within these limitations of the format that defined surimono as a genre were also new possibilities for the creation of privately designed, seasonal works of poetry, going far beyond the earlier *saitanchō*. As a single sheet, deluxe piece, almost immediately perceived in full, the model of the poetic presentation sheet offered a different material body than the bound booklet for surimono to work with. Early pieces were not always up to this challenge, merely filling the new format with old, *saitanchō*-like content and layout, but a number of others progressively explored the possibilities of this unitary surface for the creation of surimono with internal cohesiveness—a sense of structure, order and completion as an individual piece. This sense of a surimono as a full, unified work was often achieved through the anchoring of its structure to a standard form other than the anthology page, though at the lowest level, the topic markers borrowed from there could help the verses to coalesce.

Announcement and calendar formats, however, with verses plugged into suitable places within their content, allowed not only for a more structured and rounded sense of order, but also playfully overwrote other cultural forms with the aesthetics of *haikai*. Illustration, likewise, was a way of introducing an external, cultural element with its own associations, uses and structures, into which poetry is then fit. Rantai's "Treasure Ship" is the most obvious parallel to Jokō's *noh* invitation or Seisei's calendar in this regard, taking the custom of placing an image of the *takarabune* beneath one's pillow on the first night of the year, and then structuring the work according to the allusions that arise from this practice.

At this level, illustration and these other cultural practices external to the poetry itself appear at the same level, and perform the same function. Like programs, calendars and New Year customs, images bring with them their own networks of associations and structures of meaning. Where images and the customary utilizations of works on paper differ, however, is in the sheer, seemingly endless variety of the former. Calendars and programs would be arranged in various forms on later *surimono*, even on others in the Rantai collection, with month markings embedded within poetry or picture, or subtly included within the structural design, for example, but there were necessary limits to what one could do with the twelve month signs, as well as the structural models of other works on paper. By contrast, the field of illustration was as wide as the subject matter of the poetry itself, and stylistically as broad as the various approaches of poets to *haikai*. Although clever appropriations of the standard forms for works on paper would continue to be made, it was illustration that was truly to open up the genre of *surimono*, and make it permanently into something other than a blown-up page from a poetic anthology.

But of essence here is not simply illustration itself, but rather how poetry would interact with, conjoin, repel, or abrade against these extra layers of

signification. This is a matter that must be approached from both sides of the text-image relationship, thus not only how poetry would react to the “invasion” of the illustration, but also what kinds of physical manifestations—layout, calligraphy and image—would be summoned as suitable for particular types of poetry. From this point of view, experiments with different types of structure, whether modeled on standard uses of works on paper or the signifying content of the image (meanings, allusions, associations), can be seen as guided by the kind of poetry appearing on these works. Not only were some kinds of poetry more suited to the grandeur of the *kaishi* format, but some kinds of poetry called for playful uses of standard cultural forms and illustration as well. The seemingly uneven development of early surimono in chronological terms, with witty experiments immediately followed by relatively unimaginative recreations of the anthology page norm, can thus perhaps be seen as a reflection of the kinds of poetic approaches to the form individual poets took, whether they stressed play, sophistication and cohesiveness, or depth, directness, and variety. At issue, in other words, was not experiment for its own sake, but the development of a meaningful relationship between the poetic content and its external form.

In most early surimono, the text-image relationship is of the simplest sort, a neat fit of literary and pictorial theme, implying that the image is no more than decoration for the text. Poetry remains primary, then, and the image is but its translation into a different medium. As in Kōka’s “Plum” or Jokō’s “Manzai,” the image is in fact nothing more than a pictorial *dai*, giving the subject matter for the poetry that follows. The poetry may play with this subject marker, approaching it elliptically, or jokingly reinventing its meaning, but the *dai* (pictorial or linguistic) remains terra firma, the core center around which the poetry dances or revolves. Senshū’s “Inari Shrine,” light and jocular as its content is, stands as a significant exception in this regard, suggesting something of the future direction of surimono.

The image here is a misleading *dai* in a sense—as in those Tokugawa era books of erotica that hid salacious content beneath respectable covers and title slips—the sensitively colored and quiet image of the holy site rocked by the bawdy verses, focused more on the nearby pleasure quarters than the shrine. This unhinging of the image, transforming it from pillar-like *dai* to free floating agent in the signification process, is precisely, we will see, what allows surimono to develop into a complex form greater than just a poetry sheet, removed from an anthology and expanded in size, and more, in fact, than just the sum of its textual and pictorial components. For in the interaction—one might even metaphorically say “chemical reaction”—of poetry and picture, the result is a product that is more than either of these elements alone, highlighting once again the mistakes of those who, ignoring poetry or dismissing it as inconsequential after having viewed it in isolation, approach surimono primarily for its images.

But with this assertion of the growing importance of the image, a question arises, in relation to the genre definition of surimono I have striven to elaborate thus far, revealing how surimono developed as a woodblock printed version of the poetry presentation sheet. Although many of these hand-inscribed sheets that formed surimono’s model were decorative, and some even illustrated with *shita-e*, there is nothing in them comparable to the kinds of text-image relations we will see develop in surimono. Must this mode of definition then be abandoned? This is a thorny issue, for there can be no doubt that woodblock printed poetry sheets become something entirely other than their hand-inscribed model, just as many early novels were no more “histories” than their titles claimed to be. If we follow this latter comparison, we must admit that surimono do comprise a different genre than poetic presentation sheets, though their early works summon up this form as a means of naturalizing, institutionalizing and giving meaningful resonance to the new genre. Nevertheless,

based on this very act of appropriation, and because of its ongoing importance in shaping uses of the form, a view that examines the development of surimono according to its own self-definition as a poetic presentation sheet remains valuable. For there is sufficient evidence in later works to suggest that the idea of the poetic presentation sheet continues to hold meaning for poets in their utilizations of these prints, even after the elaboration of image makes them quite distinct from the model with which they began. In other words, rather than coming to be seen as something other than poetic presentation sheets for their growing complexity, surimono, by utilizing new technologies, changed the standards of the presentation sheet itself, as though to update them to the possibilities of the present day formation. I will not assert the veracity of this identification, for surimono did become—and indeed, by the very woodblock process that originally formed them, always were—different from hand-inscribed poetic presentation sheets. But as a revised, updated or even “invented” tradition, surimono continued to utilize the model of the poetic presentation sheet, even after the insertion of images made it something entirely different. For as not just poetry sheets, but *woodblock printed* poetry sheets, surimono could avail itself of all the possibilities of its technological medium, without altering its own fundamental definition as a form. In sum, to say that surimono is a genre that *developed as* a traditional poetic presentation sheet is not to say that it was a genre that was *comprised of* them. Although we can argue that technological advancements made them something else, such distinguishing technology had always been part of the form.

This distinction, fine as it may be, will be important to keep in mind as we follow the development of the surimono form through various twists, branches and transformations to the end of eighteenth century. For in this process of growth, the original inspiration of surimono will be dispersed, and blended with other forms,

including those of commercial printmaking, resulting in at least three distinct strands of surimono-related production, that are only partly consolidated again in the nineteenth century. Rather than tracing late versions of surimono back to their various roots, however, I believe it is important to keep a strict, chronological view of the genre, which as we have seen emerged as a poetic presentation sheet, and then to see how other forms accrete onto and influence this genre, altering it, but not, I argue, ever changing its core nature. Full treatment of these matters would require a chapter dealing with the transposition of Edo *haikai* poetics to visual forms, in *e-iri haisho*, *ehaisho* and especially so-called *ukiyo-e mitate-e*.⁵⁴⁷ The latter, carried out in large part by *haikai* poet and *ukiyo-e* illustrator Okumura Masanobu, is of particular importance as it culminated in the private calendar prints of 1765, which were essentially playful and sophisticated Edo *haikai* in pictorial form, and stand as one part of the foundation for *kyōka* surimono development. A second development that requires its own chapter, if not a dissertation unto itself, is the regional branching of surimono practice, with Kamigata surimono, based primarily on *haikai* verse combined with illustration in the Maruyama-Shijō style, forming a completely distinct body of work, with a unique approach, text-image relationship and method/time of exchange. The comparison of post-Buson, Bashō revival style *haikai* surimono in the Kamigata with the simultaneous practices of *kyōka* surimono in the region of Edo shows us, more starkly than any in this present study, how the poetic base of surimono influences virtually every aspect of the material form and function of these works. Nevertheless, even leaping over these mid-late eighteenth century developments to

⁵⁴⁷ The appropriateness of the term *mitate*, popularly used to refer to analogues or “stand-ins” in Japanese prints, has been challenged in the past decade in Japan. Attempting to refine terminology, based on historical usage, Iwata Hideyuki, for example, has shown that most contemporary applications of *mitate* are better described as *yatsushi* (“roughing up” the elegant), while *mitate* itself refers to an incongruous connection, where a mind-blowing relationship is drawn between objects of entirely different registers (household cleaning objects as birds, in Iwata’s example). See “Mitate-e ni kan suru gimon” in *Edo bungaku kenkyū* (Shitensha, 1993) 568-581.

examine Edo *kyōka* surimono will reveal the power of the poetic code, while allowing us to apply more directly the conceptualization of surimono as poetry presentations to the best known and most complex examples of this genre.

Chapter Four:

Changing the Poetic Base: Edo *Kyōka* and the Rise of the *Kyōka* Surimono

In the preceding chapters, I have attempted to place the art of surimono in a new, literary frame and informing historical context by demonstrating its indebtedness to the specific practices of seasonal poetic composition and exchange in Japan. I have described the manner in which surimono emerges as a latter day variant of these practices, which passed from court poetry on to *renga*, and then were appropriated by commoners and samurai practicing *haikai* verse. These amateur poets aimed to give their compositions an air of dignity and authority by summoning up the “classical” structures of poetic exchange in the form, layout, materials and content of their gifts.⁵⁴⁸ Moreover, the new application of the technology of woodblock printing to the structure of the poetic gift, established in relation to calligraphic writing, allowed these latter day practitioners to mobilize all of the talents in a specialist labor economy as their own, distributing surimono as reflections of the excellence of themselves and their poetic circles. Crucially, because these poets were relying on a primarily literary structure, there was no perceived necessity for illustration in these early works, which relied on grand format, dignified calligraphy and sophisticated poetic content to impress the recipient. Illustration, in the small percentage of works in which it was used, originated as part of the gift structure, the traditionally accompanying seasonal plant or object transformed virtually to image.⁵⁴⁹ Ultimately, however, illustration

⁵⁴⁸ Such uses of classical traditions (either courtly or Chinese) to give resonance and depth to their creations is typical of *haikai* poets, who, for example, assumed the traditional structure of *kigo* seasonal references (supplementing it with more prosaic elements), employed courtly poetic terminology and diction (alongside everyday language), and explicitly argued that the classically established *hon'i* (poetic essences) of certain words should never be ignored (while transforming these to the world of the commoner). In material practices too, *haikai* poets inscribed their verses in largely conventional ways, using *shikishi*, *tanzaku* and *kaishi*, although one could argue that the *haiga* is a novel elaboration on traditional formats, and woodblock printing an opportunity for the poet to focus on verse alone, without formerly mandatory self-inscription. I do not wish to imply that their exalted past was all “Japanese” either, as references to Chinese history and poetry also fill *haikai*. For some examples, see my Chapter Three, or Shirane (1998), especially Chapter Eight (“Remapping the Past”).

⁵⁴⁹ For example, the two illustrated works of 1710 both depict New Year gifts, one a picture of the treasure ship for the recipients’ good dreams, such as were popularly sold at the New Year, and the second an image of plum blossoms and lottery prizes, including a *bonsai* pine. These were precisely the

was made into more than a stand-in or supplement, becoming the primary means for structuring a surimono's *shukō* 趣向, or witty, unifying device, and thus began to include all manner of subjects. Increasingly, in fact, the power of images to relate intimately to or even stand in for poetry was developed over the course of the eighteenth century, in the movement from *e-iri haikai* (絵入俳諧) books to *ehaisho* (絵俳書) and the development of *haikai* poetic techniques such as *hiyu* (喩), *mitate* (見立) and *yatsushi* (略) in Japanese prints, culminating in the picture calendars of 1765, which are, for all intents and purposes, nothing less than visual *haikai* of the Edoza (江戸座) variety.⁵⁵⁰

In these final chapters, I will attempt to apply the insights into the nature of surimono made through analysis of early examples and the social/literary context in which they emerged to the most celebrated and best known representatives of the surimono genre, the *kyōka* surimono produced primarily in Edo from 1785 to the mid-1830s. By far the most gorgeous, technically, pictorially and structurally refined surimono type, these *kyōka* surimono, as detailed in my review of literature in Chapter One, have been treated primarily as pictorial art and a subtype of *ukiyo-e*. Defining surimono as a poetic presentation, however, forces us to look at these pictorial works in a different way, specifically, to see how the nature of the poetry appearing on them in fact determines the nature of their pictorial content, and even how their format, colors, layout, content and interplay of text and image reflect an informing literary

kind of objects suitable for giving at the New Year, with a verse on *tanzaku* tied to the branches, or around a rolled or folded picture.

⁵⁵⁰ The term *Edoza* strictly refers to the *haikai* groups that revered Kikaku as their model, but more generally to the kind of flashy, stylish and playful *haikai* that developed in Edo, from the Sentokumon to Tachiba Fukaku (1662-1753) to the Asakusa poets. This period of *haikai* production is skipped over in most histories of *haikai*, or treated briefly as the nadir between Bashō and Buson, primarily because the verses lack seriousness and resonance beyond their immediate context. I will argue, however, that the esteemed picture calendars of 1765-66 represent nothing less than the spirit, devices and sphere of allusions of *Edoza haikai* put into visual form. The same kind of split between critically degraded poetry and the critically acclaimed imagery it gave rise to will be treated in the next chapter, with Magao's *haikaika* and the type of complex surimono it engendered.

poetics. In short, nineteenth century *kyōka* surimono are not simply prints with poetry but rather poetic presentations, still relying on the classical structure for such works, in which physical appearance—the choice of paper, color, brush and writing style—is expected to reflect tastefully the poetic sensibilities of the giver, for the sake of the recipient. Thus the addition of regal and/or ostentatious illustration, far from invalidating nineteenth century surimono as poetic presentations, can in fact be seen as part of the nature of these works as such, embodying the colorful, pompous tones of the poetry. Moreover, illustration, as described in the previous chapter, allows these works to summon a variety of organizing cultural complexes, in fact allowing poem and image on these surimono to interact exactly as *kyōka* (*haikaika*) poetry itself does with the classical tradition of courtly verse that informs it. Therefore, although there can be no doubt that images and their interplay with textual components have replaced poetry in fine calligraphy alone as the central focus of these works, I will now demonstrate that it is in fact still poetry that lies as the determining seed of the form and structure of nineteenth century *kyōka* surimono.

In continuing to define nineteenth century surimono as poetic presentations, then, even when their illustrative component rises from mere decoration to become a central and indeed absolutely essential element in the works' processes of signification, I mean to suggest that these images are under the domain of poetry and its controlling aesthetics. Still more, the question is not merely one of illustration, but of the entire, reformed body of nineteenth century surimono and its practices of exchange, reworked in relation to these changing poetics. The glittering, gilt surface of nineteenth century surimono (often in calligraphy as well as image), their square format, reminiscent of the courtly *shikishi*, their refined pictorial style and subject matter and its subtle, intricate relation to poetic material, and the dynamics of direct, person-to-person exchange as a means of symbolic interaction all relate to the ideals of

haikaika and what I describe as a highly self-conscious “classical revival” movement in the early nineteenth century. Moreover, treated as seasonal presentations, New Year *kyōka* surimono call our attention to the structure of the gift as an informing feature of their own content, one with which the past-present riddle-like orientation of *kyōka* poetry almost perfectly coincides, allowing these works to achieve unprecedented complexity of internal structure. In sum, treating poetry and its use in presentation as primary will allow us to comprehend the nature of nineteenth century *kyōka* surimono as no picture-based approach possibly could, bringing material form and abstract poetics into alignment. The goal of this chapter will be to establish this relation, by exploring the development, nature and structure of nineteenth century *kyōka* (*haikaika*) and following its elaboration into a material form (surimono) closely suited to its character.

My approach here suggests nothing less than that the history of surimono as a form, as well as the analysis of individual surimono as specific examples, can be best treated through a focus on poetry, its content, structure, devices and tone. Although space does not allow it here, an ideal treatment of surimono as a form would trace the genre from where I left off in 1736, following the alignment of pictorial and poetic aesthetics in illustrated *haikai* books (俳書・*haisho*) and popular prints (*ukiyo-e*). Specifically, for Edo *kyōka* surimono, this would require an analysis of the union of Edoza *haikai* aesthetics and *ukiyo-e* style in the work of poet-designer Okumura Masanobu, who led in the transformation of *mitate* (incongruous comparison) and *yatsushi* (略・“roughing up” the elegant) from literary to popular pictorial devices. Masanobu’s progressions were combined with private printing and taken to their height in the revolutionary picture calendar (*egoyomi*) parties of 1765-66, organized by rival Edoza *haikai* poets, which produced works that I believe can be called “poetry prints” (though they lack poetic texts of any sort), for their almost perfect integration

of sophisticated and witty Edoza *haikai* aesthetics with *ukiyo-e* style. It is this achievement, along with the formats and uses provided by early *haikai* surimono, which provided the two legs on which *kyōka* surimono developed in the late eighteenth century, simultaneously grafting poetry onto individually designed *egoyomi* and appropriating the grand *kaishi*-like format of *haikai* surimono for *kyōka* groups, as the poetic base for surimono in Edo gradually transformed. Ultimately, however, it was neither the miniature *egoyomi* nor the large *haikai* surimono sheet that provided the most appropriate format for *kyōka* presentation, which took its final, ideal form in the square *shikishi*, for reasons to be explored soon the material body best suited to *kyōka* poetics.

But it is also important to emphasize that the development of the *kyōka* surimono in Edo is far from the whole story of the form after 1736. No history of surimono would be complete without examination of simultaneous developments in the Kamigata region, where the Bashō-revival aesthetics of Buson and his followers ultimately led to the creation of a radically different type of surimono, as well as of a unique style of illustration appropriate to it. No clearer evidence for the central role of poetry in determining the material form of surimono can be presented than in the comparison of simultaneous developments in Edo and the Kamigata, where these starkly distinct approaches to surimono grew in response to the need to reflect poetic worldviews, approaches and materials equally disparate. To paint with the broad brush space here demands, the distinction is one of Kikaku-inspired Edoza *share* (cool sophistication and wit), epitomized by Ōta Nanpo as well in early *kyōka*, combined with the idealized classicism of later *haikaika* poets, versus the allied Bashō poetics ideals of *karumi* (軽み • “lightness,” seeing importance in ordinary things), *shibumi* (渋み • “astringency,” subdued, rather than vibrant images) and *shiori* (しをり • “gentleness,” delicacy and pathos) dominant in the Kamigata. We see these ideals in

surimono in style (contrived elegance vs. expressive spontaneity), coloring (glittering and bright vs. earth-tones), subject (sensuous/idealized vs. common/pathetic), materials (rich vs. simple), format (the courtly *shikishi* vs. the single verse *haikai kaishi*), text-image structure (intricate and culturally complex vs. seasonally associative) and even times of exchange (New Year vs. multi-seasonal). The neglected *haikai* surimono of the Kamigata region, which long outlived its more famous Edo cousin, deserves more attention than can be given it here for many reasons, but most importantly as exemplifying the role of poetics as almost a kind of genetic code, determining virtually every aspect of the surimono's material body and functions of use.

For reasons of conciseness, however, as well as because the Edo-based *kyōka* surimono is the most prominent and representative version of the form internationally, I will focus on it here, attempting to bring the perspectives gained through an analysis of early *haikai* surimono to its unique structure. For indeed it must be emphasized that the mature *kyōka* surimono of the nineteenth century *is* unique, not only more pictorially rich than any other type of surimono, but also the most intricate and complex in text-image interactions, making it worthy of such special attention. Seeking the reasons for such sophistication, the multiple layering of most nineteenth century *kyōka* surimono, we can find them in the type of poetry inscribed on these works, its idealized overlay of past and present, contingent moment and classical archetype, as well as in the practiced meeting of illustration with poetic essence, built up over the eighteenth century. In short, the images on nineteenth century *kyōka* surimono act on its poetry in almost exactly the same manner that this poetry does on the *waka* tradition, borrowing its devices playfully to transform meaning through pun, conceptual play, classical allusion, free or seasonal association, semantic displacement and the elegant confusion of past and present. To this extent, dividing “text” and

“image” in nineteenth century surimono is an artificial imposition, albeit one that helps us to see how each element defines the other, for the only meaningful way to treat these works is through analysis of both elements in tandem, as unified signifiers that create meaning through reference to one another, never alone. I will have more to say on the theoretical question of text and image in my conclusion, but will start here by defining the nature and development of *kyōka* poetry, so that we can see how it determines the form, structure and uses of its surimono.

Popularity, Dispersion and Recreation:

Leaping ahead to the aftermath of the calendar parties of 1765-66, the popular acclaim of these events among the *chōnin* (町人) burghers led to three distinct uses of privately published single sheet prints in the 1770s. The first was the now traditional *haikai* surimono, unchanged in size and usage, though after 1766 incorporating some of the material practices that had been utilized for calendar prints, such as color printing and the commissioning of professional artists. These latter aspects led to larger and more detailed illustrations, with the resulting development of a split format as standard, the formal separation of text and image to either side of the central fold reflecting the division of labor (and sometimes, at this point, also aesthetics) between poets and hired artists. The second use was a popular, non-poetic variant on the *haikai* surimono, which retained its identical format and layout, and utilized similar kinds of illustrations, but lacked poetry. These pieces were strictly personal, event-oriented announcements, including invitations to musical, dance or dramatic performances, parties, changes of name and address, or memorial prints after the death of a colleague. Although such prints have typically been called surimono and treated as no different from the poetry presentation sheets (indeed, only their textual portions appear significantly different), I make a clear distinction between them and the object of this

study, and argue that these are merely a hollow spin-off from actual surimono practice, with surimono's elite form and elegance, but little of its poetic essence. Of course this is not to say that *haikai* surimono could not or did not perform all of the functions of the announcement surimono, but they did so always with poetry, in a form suitable to the poetic presentation sheet.⁵⁵¹ Moreover, in terms of text-image relations, announcement surimono are a regression, utilizing illustration purely for decorative purposes. Like the third use of private publications, calendar prints, they also represent a movement towards individual uses of surimono, rather than group productions. The miniature calendar prints made in the decades after the Meiwa exchanges, increasing in number and size towards the 1790s, were strictly individual, with private designers competing with one another to show off their cleverness and wit. The drive for original designs and unique methods of disguising the calendar numbers and references to the coming year led to a full exploration of the possibilities for such prints, going far beyond the Meiwa calendars in inventiveness. Although all three branches of private publication ultimately contributed to a new kind of surimono in the nineteenth century, only the first of them at this point deserves the name, neither of the others serving as poetic presentation sheets.

From the mid-1780s, however, a new craze seized buoyant, wit-loving Edo popular culture, transforming many of its forms and opening up new possibilities of expression. This wave sweeping across the cultural landscape was *kyōka*, literally “mad verse,” which I will translate here as “madcap verse” to highlight its wacky, irreverent nature. Based on the 5-7-5-7-7 syllabic structure of the courtly *tanka* (短歌 • “short song”), Edo *kyōka* was a variety of light or comic verse that summoned up the exalted elegance of the classical past, even as it reduced or ridiculed it. As a form, *kyōka* itself has a fairly extensive history, but was only popularly practiced in Edo

⁵⁵¹ For example, Jokō's Noh surimono, which merged a programmed event with related *haikai* poetry.

from the latter part of the eighteenth century, rising suddenly, through a series of “hit” anthologies published in the early 1780s, to a mass following that outstripped even *haikai* in that city. Surimono with *kyōka* followed from 1785 on, gradually merging with each of the three forms of private printing described above to create a multi-leveled and varied practice, which by the end of the century had transformed the poetic base of Edo surimono from exclusively *haikai* to predominantly *kyōka*. This transformation, moreover, though also a popularization, was nothing like the superficial copying of *haikai* surimono in “invitation/announcement” forms, for the new textual basis had meaning and bite, an ethos and aesthetic of its own, entirely unlike the vapid (and inevitably short-lived) “invitation.”⁵⁵² As we have seen from its origins, surimono was a form with its roots in poetry, while its varied development shows us how the nature of that poetry, like a seed, ultimately determined the form, layout, illustration and text-image relations suitable for its precise literary character. Therefore, if the hypothesis we have been building concerning the relationship between poetry and material form in surimono is to hold, this transformation of surimono’s poetic base should imply nothing less than a radical reinterpretation and recreation of the genre. And in fact, after some initial experiments in trying to merge *kyōka* with pre-existing forms, fumbling through the three kinds of private printing outlined above, it is indeed an entirely different kind of surimono, with different format, layout, illustration, calligraphy and text-image relations, that emerges from the first decade of the nineteenth century. This chapter will trace this transition from “prints with *kyōka*” to “*kyōka* surimono,” attempting to define the nature of the *kyōka* movement by looking at its development and the practices of surimono it generated.

⁵⁵² These announcement and invitation surimono, critical as I am of them, do reveal quite clearly however the status that the large format (originally *kaishi*-based) surimono form held in its time, as indicative of elegance and wealth. Such large folded papers, as I have described in Chapter Two, were also used in official announcements and letters, giving them a more recent source of authority as well.

In this first of several chapters devoted to the brief but brilliant flowering of the surimono genre in *kyōka* surimono, my concern will be to follow the *material* rise and development of *kyōka* surimono as a unique form, concentrating first on defining the background and nature of Edo *kyōka*, in order to see the essence of this poetry and how it will find material body in surimono. Some care will be taken to differentiate *kyōka* from, while relating it to, the *haikai* (and *senryū* ・ 川柳) practices concurrent with it, looking at the unique approaches to language and tradition this newly popular form offered as the key to its attraction. The motivations and circumstances leading to the employment of *kyōka* on a genre that had been almost exclusively associated with *haikai* to that time will then be described, and the “takeover” of currently existing forms for its material basis analyzed. I will then follow the meeting of two streams of *kyōka* surimono, miniature prints with calendar marks and poetry, and large, *kaishi*-style *kyōka* works in the manner of *haikai* surimono, in the early nineteenth century *shikishi*-like *kakuban* surimono, the format that emerged seemingly from nowhere to dominate the genre in Edo for the next three decades. My focus here will be on the achievement of a unique form of surimono that more fully captures the nature of the poetry appearing on it in function and material form, as well as unraveling the several strands of Japanese print practice that fed into it. The subsequent chapter, focused on the largest contributor to *kyōka* surimono in the nineteenth century, Shikatsube Magao, will then build on the material analysis presented here to look more specifically at the aesthetics of surimono’s content and the ethos of its exchange, suggesting some of the intellectual background of *kyōka* surimono, and what the larger implications of its practices were for society, politics and the outlining of a field of culture.

Kyō (Madness): The Edo Aesthetics of Play

The Meiwa calendar parties were but one early type of gathering at which the wits and talents of the day came together to make intriguing, beautiful or comic works, often employing a playful sense of competition to spur participants to creativity.⁵⁵³ In 1769, several students of Uchiyama Gatei 内山賀邸 (1723-1788), a *waka* poet and *kokugaku* scholar, gathered with some friends at the house of one of their colleagues to join in a *kyōka* (“mad verse”) party. *Kyōka*, as a relatively rule-free, playful version of *waka*, was a form with a long history in Japanese poetry, dating back at least to the fourteenth century collection *Hyakushu kyōka* (百酒狂歌 • “One Hundred Mad Verses on Alcohol”), which itself hinted at the use of *kyōka* as an informal party entertainment, probably as old as the social functions of poetry. Unlike the *haikaika* of the *Kokinshū*, however, *kyōka* were not even counted as a peripheral form in the poetic tradition, the very name “mad verse” suggesting its status as a complete outsider, an other to its norms. In the Tokugawa Period, *kyōka* had already reached several peaks by the early eighteenth century, but all in Kyōto, where Matsunaga Teitoku and others of his lineage, especially Ishida Mitoku 石田未得 (1587-1666), Nakarai Bokuyō 半井卜養 (1607-1678) and Nagata Teiryū 永田貞柳 (1654-1734), had employed the form for light comedy.⁵⁵⁴ Teiryū was the most successful of the

⁵⁵³ The following discussion of the culture of play (*asobi*) and the rise of *kyōka* in eighteenth century Edo also draws from numerous sources in art and history, but for the literary background presented here I have been particular attentive to Haruko Iwasaki’s dissertation *The World of Gesaku: Playful Writers of Late Eighteenth Century Japan* (Harvard University, 1984), Donald Keene’s foundational study for Edo literature in the United States, *World Within Walls: Japanese Literature of the Pre-Modern Era 1600-1867* (New York: Grove Press, 1976), Mizuno Minoru’s “Kyōka kaisetsu” in *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū: Kibyōshi, Senryū, Kyōka*. (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1971), Hamada Giichirō’s *Edo bungeikō: kyōka, senryū, gesaku* (Iwanami Shoten, 1988), his “Kaisetsu” in *Nihon koten bungaku taikei: senryū kyōka shū* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1970) and his “Kyōka” in *Kōza Nihon Bungaku* Vol. 8 (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1968). I have also drawn directly from multiple primary sources, especially the superb multi-volume series *Edo kyōkaban senshū* (Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 1998), which reproduces all of the major *kyōka* anthologies published in Edo, the *Ōta Nanpo zenshū* (Hamada Giichirō, ed., Iwanami shoten, 1985-1990) and the *Kyōbun takara-awase ki* (Kobayashi Fumiko, ed., Kyūko Shoin, 2000).

⁵⁵⁴ On *kyōka* in the Kamigata region, see Nishijima Atsuya’s *Kinsei Kamigata kyōka no kenkyū* (Ōsaka: Izumi Shoin, 1990) and Manabe Kōsai’s *Mikan Kamigata kyōkashū* (Koten Bunko, 1970) and *Mikan Kamigata kyōka shuūsei* (Seibundō Shuppan, 1969). Summaries are found in Keene (1976), 515-517

Kyōto *kyōka* poets, and this verse, to give some of the flavor of his style, was his most celebrated, composed on the occasion of the presentation of a large ink stick to the imperial court:

<i>Tsuki narade</i>	Though not the moon
<i>Kumo no ue made</i>	This ink has risen to dwell
<i>Suminoboru</i>	Above the clouds.
<i>Kore wa ika naru</i>	What sort of rationale
<i>Yuen naruran</i>	Could possibly explain this? ⁵⁵⁵

But it was Bokuyō who seems to have been most influential in spreading *kyōka* among Edo elites, having come to the city to serve as a doctor to the shogunate. The posthumous publishing of his poetry in 1682, with *ukiyo-e* illustration by Hishikawa Moronobu 菱川師宣 (1618-94), was both the first and only *kyōka* book produced there for the next century.⁵⁵⁶ During this time, *kyōka* apparently continued to be composed on an impromptu basis, as a gentlemanly diversion for scholarly samurai, but were not considered a form worthy of preservation or seriousness.⁵⁵⁷ An event self-consciously based on *kyōka*, therefore, implied a changing view of the genre, and was in fact even met with some resistance from at least one of the initial participants, Ōta Nanpo (1749-1823), who years later recalled the reluctance with which he joined.⁵⁵⁸

and Satō Mitsunobu's "Kyōka surimono-kō: Edo bunjin no asobi" in *Surimono: Privately Published Prints from the Spencer Museum of Art* (Tokyo: Riccar Museum of Art, 1991), 10-12.

⁵⁵⁵ 月ならで雲の上まですみのぼるこれは如何なるゆえんなるらん. This legendary verse, which gave Teiryū his *kyōka* name Yūensai, was compiled in Ōta Nanpo's *Shukusankashū* of 1823, and reproduced in Hamada Giichiro's "Kyōka" in *Kōza nihon bungaku*, vol. VIII (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1968), 25. The poem depends on puns on *sumi* ("dwell"/"ink") and *yuen* ("reason"/"black soot"), and the literary description of the imperial court as being "above the clouds". An alternate reading would thus be: "Though not the moon, this ink has risen above the clouds [into the imperial court]. What kind of lamp black might this be?"

⁵⁵⁶ The work was *Bokuyō kyōkashū* 卜養狂歌集. Hishikawa Moronobu, a prolific illustrator, is conventionally considered the founder of the *ukiyo-e* style, although more accurately he was the first to formulate the tradition of painted genre scenes preceding him into popular form in woodblock prints and paintings.

⁵⁵⁷ See Iwasaki (1984), 54, and Keene (1976) 517.

⁵⁵⁸ Ōta Nanpo, in his memoir *Yakko dako* (奴師勞之・"The Footman Kite"), records Kisshū's memories of the event, in which he [Nanpo] was a resisting member, saying that *kyōka* was to be made

The 1769 *kyōka awase* was the idea of one Kojima Gennosuke 小島源之助 (1743-1802), whose serious interest in the form had led his sympathetic master Gatei to dub him with the ostentatiously elegant penname Karagoromo Kisshū (唐衣橘州). No record of this initial meeting, held at Kisshū's home, was made, and in fact, following the unspoken, "gentlemanly" prohibition against *kyōka* preservation, the first anthologies of Edo compositions in this form were not published until 1783. We are fortunate, however, to have extant an unusual, retrospective volume entitled *Meiwa jūgoban kyōka awase* (明和十五番狂歌合せ・“Fifteen Matched *Kyōka* of the Meiwa Era [1764-1772]”), with internal notes dated 1813 and 1814, which presents in full the poetry of one of these early gatherings—otherwise only published piecemeal in later anthologies, without the original dates of composition.⁵⁵⁹ A note by Nanpo explains the context of the work:

Way back when, oh, around 1769, we started to have the first *kyōka* meetings for fun, under the direction of Karakoromo Kisshū. In the spring of the next year, Sanrin Kashinsai drew free-running pictures for us, and with the same friends of comic poetry, we composed verses for them, three and four at a time, forcing our master Uchiyama Gatei and the elder Hagiwara Sōko to serve as our judges. Determined to somehow save this wastepaper for posterity, I begged the owner of the Seizandō to add a word or two as he liked. And that, I tell you, was just how it came about.⁵⁶⁰

Meiwa jūgoban presents a total of thirty verses, composed by the six poets who attended this 1770 New Year *kyōka awase* based on five pairs of drawings by Kashinsai, with comments by the judges following. As Nanpo refers to these six as

on the spot, not thought out in advance, and that only fools would hold a *kyōka awase*. But Nanpo concludes “Well then, let me be a fool too.” Nanpo, of course, became the leading figure in the early *kyōka* movement, and his memoirs, written after he had officially disassociated himself from *kyōka*, may be stilted in the direction of showing his participation as half-hearted. Take Ryūzō (ed.) *Ōta Nanpo-shū* (Yūhōdō, 1913), 687-88

⁵⁵⁹ Keene, erroneously, states that this work was *published* in 1770 and *edited* by Uchiyama Gatei and Hagiwara Sōko, who are in fact listed as the *hanja* for the competition, but were clearly not the editors. Other characteristics, such as the inclusion of “Yomo no Utagaki Magao” as author of one section, point at this later date, as Magao only received the Yomo name in 1797.

⁵⁶⁰ *Edo kyōkabon senshū* 江戸狂歌本選集, Vol. 1. Tokyo: Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 1998.

the “same friends of comic poetry,” we can surmise that this small group was that which attended Kisshū’s first gathering in 1769. Moreover, most remarkably, this text reveals the intimate connections between *kyōka* composition and one of its bases, pictorial imagery, a relationship that led to the preservation of this session, and would later transform surimono. Seeing the manner in which this early gathering was carried out, we can surmise that some later, *kyōka* surimono may have been created from just this sort of picture-to-text transformation. This topic is complex, however, as the question of “which came first, the image or the text” can be treated in ways beyond merely literal application to specific cases—the influence of *ukiyo-e* imagery in general on poetry and vice-versa, for example. I will discuss this later in the chapter.

The poetry composed at this 1770 *kyōka awase* was quite light, suggesting that the Edo *kyōka* movement had not yet hit full stride. For simple pictures showing an itinerant New Year musician (鳥追 • *torioi*) being attacked by a dog, for example, the poets came up with the following:

<i>Koe agete</i>	For the dog
<i>Tobi tsuku inu ni</i>	Raising its voice and leaping
<i>Shamisen de</i>	He plays the earth
<i>Chi wo hikinagara</i>	With <i>shamisen</i> dragging behind him
<i>Nigeru torioi</i>	This pale, fleeing musician ⁵⁶¹
--Hideyasu	

<i>Tobi tsukare</i>	Leapt upon
<i>Te wo torioi wa</i>	The musician takes
<i>Shamisen no</i>	The <i>shamisen</i> ’s <i>koma</i>
<i>Koma wo hayamete</i>	and heightens its tone
<i>Inu no nighoe</i>	The yelp of an escaping dog ⁵⁶²
--Nanpo	

⁵⁶¹ A relatively straightforward comic verse, relying on the reader’s imagination of the sounds a *shamisen* might make as it dragged behind the panicked *torioi*. *Chi wo hikinagara* also means “as his blood drains” (as he goes pale). The opening lines have an intentional ambiguity that could make it the musician “raising his voice and jumping.”

⁵⁶² The humor here is in the reversal, with the musician scaring away the dog with the sound of the *shamisen*. The final line could refer either to the “escaping cry” of a dog, or the frightful sound from the instrument that resembles it. There are also puns on *koma*, which could mean either the fret inserted between strings and board to change the sound, or a dog (thus “speed up the dog”, make it run away), and bridge on *te wo tori* and *torioi*.

<i>Owarete wa</i>	Giving ground
<i>Inu ni okure wo</i>	To the attacking dog
<i>Torioi no</i>	The musician's
<i>Utate hyōshi mo</i>	Singing loses its rhythm
<i>Naku bakari nari</i>	To a ceaseless barking ⁵⁶³
--Kisshū	

Interestingly, Kisshū is judged the runaway winner of the contest, getting positive points from both judges for all five of his contributions, whereas the other poets' reviews (including those for Nanpo and Hezutsu Tōsaku (1726-1789), highly influential poets later) are far more mixed. Kisshū, moreover, seems to be the leading voice, with the other poets attempting to follow in his light, elegant style, though not quite achieving his purity of phrasing. But it is clear from *Meiwa jūgoban* that *kyōka* is still being utilized as a pleasant, mildly comic entertainment, an exercise in wit to be sure, but not the kind of wit that would leave a mark on the world or have a lasting effect on its participants.

These initial meetings at Kisshū's home were small, but after a few trial runs proved successful, the well connected Tōsaku and Nanpo brought in like-minded acquaintances, who then recruited yet other wits. These later recruits took hilariously ridiculous poetic names,⁵⁶⁴ which often had the ring of a classical personage, but literal meanings grounded in self-degradation, with satiric wit going far beyond "Karagoromo" ("Chinese [though also possibly 'empty'] robes") or Nanpo's own *kyōka* alter ego, Yomo no Akara 四方赤良 (after *Yomo no Aka*, his favorite brand of sake). As Kisshū recalls:

Nanpo brought with him a friend who called himself Ōne no Futoki [大根太木 • "Big Rooted Fat Tree," implying a stubborn person] who in turn introduced Moto no Mokuami [元木網 • "A Complete Waste"] and his wife Chie no Naishi [智恵内子 • "Lacking Wisdom"]. Hezutsu Tōsaku [平鉄東作 • "Flat Iron

⁵⁶³ The musician seems to be singing even as he flees, a comic touch. There is a bridge on *okure wo tori* (lose ground) and *torioi*, and a pun on *naku nari* ("bark"/"lose").

⁵⁶⁴ Considering the unification of style in these names, I believe it likely that they were probably given to early participants, rather than chosen by them. These self-degrading names are unique to Edo *kyōka*.

Maker of the East”] and Hamabe no Kurobito [浜辺黒人・“Black Man of the Bay,” implying a deeply sunburned person from a fishing village] were also members. Two years in, we were joined by Akera Kankō [朱楽管江・“Couldn’t Give a Crap”].⁵⁶⁵

Although such analysis may beg the question “what’s in a name?” in fact the transformation from the use of simple nicknames or actual personal names in the early gatherings to these complex overlays of classical-sounding *nom de plume* with humble readings thereafter suggests a corresponding change in the direction of *kyōka* practice. From a light, refined pastime practiced by men of learning, *kyōka* was rapidly developing into a medium of caustic wit for those who felt themselves rejected by society. Both mocking and proudly applying their perceived terms of disqualification in personal nicknames, these poets shaped for themselves humble, nothing-to-lose identity positions from which to launch attacks on conventionally accepted truths. Like *haikai* before Teitoku, this new form of “mad verse” in Edo, which came to be known as *Tenmei kyōka* after the period name in which it achieved popularity, delighted in smashing high cultural ideals into the harsh reality of the present world and examining the incongruous result. Though Kisshū was invested in the continued use of more elevated subject matter and gentler methods of achieving humorous effects, Nanpo and Akera Kankō became partners in satire and coarseness, spurring each other on to wilder and more daring efforts, which ultimately gave Edo *kyōka* a flavor entirely unlike any before it. This move towards creative monikers, therefore, also gave poets fresh identities, specifically personas with one foot in the idealized past and another in the crude, debased present, directing composition thereby.

This transformation also represented the application of Nanpo’s earlier efforts in ‘madness,’ *kyōshi*, “madcap poems” based on Chinese verse, and *kyōkanbun*, “madcap prose” in Chinese style, to *kyōka*. The use of Chinese for these expressions

⁵⁶⁵ Ōta Nanpo-shū (Yūhōdō, 1913), 688.

of social satire implicitly hinted at the status of the author as a highly learned man, while intentionally creating a clash between the ideals of this high learning and the low subject matter and wildly free style these texts took on. The Chinese cultural example offered ready models for famous eccentrics, brilliant social outcasts and literati hermits, lending the pose of “madness” deep support. For this reason, perhaps, Nanpo seems to have felt more comfortable publishing his Chinese-based works than his *kyōka*, bringing out his first book of madcap Chinese prose and poetry in 1767. In *Neboke sensei bunshū* (“The Collected Writings of Master Sleepyhead”), Nanpo took aim at himself and the world around him, in much the same manner as his later *kyōka*, whatever the lightness of his original efforts in that latter genre. Making the revered Chinese classics he had been taught his base, Nanpo filled their structures with the content he saw in the decrepit urban world around him, creating a dissonance that parodied contemporary reality, even as it delighted in its grotesqueness. Moreover, he cast himself as the narcoleptic “master sleepyhead,” unable to keep his head erect for grogginess, but a great talker in his sleep, who threw off poems, stories and essays like dreams. Both of these poses resemble those found in mature Edo *kyōka*, satirizing accepted classical models in order to reveal the inequities, degradation and absurdities of contemporary society, and mocking the writer’s own weakness and impotence to change things, if not the very idea of individual integrity, while simultaneously presenting him as so brilliant that he can effortlessly toss off classical references “in his sleep.” The “*kyō*” of *kyōka* had always implicitly signified a momentary lapse on its author’s part, a falling from the standards of high culture to be forgiven because the composer was momentarily “mad,” perhaps drunk or simply possessed by the giggles. But in Edo *kyōka* such “madness” was not apologetic, but profoundly opposed to the cultural “norm,” shaking the world by its roots with silliness, and presenting its values

in an upside-down manner that nevertheless had its own kind of sense. At times this meant taking accepted classical dictums so literally that they became absurd:

<i>Utayomi wa</i>	As for poetry recitation
<i>Heta kose yokere</i>	The less skilled the better
<i>Ame tsuchi no</i>	If heaven and earth
<i>Ugoki idashite</i>	Began to move
<i>Tamaru mono kawa</i>	Do you think we could take it? ⁵⁶⁶

Such madness, in fact, is a complicated combination of elements—some of them a radical challenge to the feudal, hierarchical order—that requires further examination.

Examination of the “ranks of idiots,” as Nanpo affectionately referred to his colleagues in *kyōka*, reveals that they, like the participants in the Meiwa calendar parties, were comprised of a mixture of samurai and townspeople, a free mingling of classes that can be compared only to some earlier *haikai* groups, such as Bashō’s, in its open-mindedness and sense of equality. For Bashō, of course, it was only the spirit of poetry that mattered, and one’s class was of no importance in this regard, all people having roughly the same potential for poetic development and insight. In the Edo circles of play, likewise, gender and age, as well as class, the discriminations that organized life outside of these associations, were put on hold, but as we will see, for quite different reasons. Chie no Naishi and Moto no Mokuami, for example, ran a bathhouse, Tōsaku a tobacco shop, while Hamabe no Kurobito’s birth was flaunted in his name. The outspoken Nanpo himself, from a low ranking samurai family, was just twenty at the time of the first party. This combination of high and low classes (merchants being considered the lowest of the four recognized classes) was reflected to some extent in the poetry of this group, bringing plebian experience to classical form and diction, or phrasing classical subject matter in contemporary parlance. In its

⁵⁶⁶ 歌よみは下手こそよけれあめつちの動き出してたまるものかは。 *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, vol. 47, 533, no.286. The poem’s meaning relies on a line from the *Kokinshū* preface which asserts that successful poetry moves heaven and earth, overturning the intimidation of conventional standards of quality.

most outspoken, anonymous form, *rakushu* (落首), *kyōka* turned openly political, expressing disdain with the government and its lack of connection with the concerns of the average person:

<i>Nengō wa</i>	Though the illustrious era name
<i>Yasuku nagaku to</i>	Has been changed to
<i>Kawaredomo</i>	“Cheap” and “long-lasting”
<i>Shoshiki takakute</i>	Everything’s so expensive
<i>Ima ni meiwaku</i>	And trouble’s just now brewing ⁵⁶⁷

These open clashes, like the constitution of the meetings, gave the works bite, a challenge to the official order as it stood. In terms of development, moreover, the openness of *kyōka* to all classes and kinds of people encouraged mass participation, eventually in countryside as well as city, a phenomenon we will see equally in *kyōka* *surimono*. The spirit of play, one might say, as well as the camaraderie of engaging in a shared activity, with likeminded ends, overrode the discriminations of gender, class and age, putting aside the promulgated feudal hierarchies to allow people of different backgrounds to work together to shape a rich project.

On the part of samurai like Nanpo, however, this lack of discrimination seems less youthful idealism than a complete disgust with the system as it currently operated. Nanpo was an ambitious and hard-working student of Gatei’s, pressed by his mother to study and improve his lot in life, but already by his late teens he seems to have realized the futility of attempting to get ahead in the world this way.⁵⁶⁸ The structure of the shogunate, based largely on hereditary positions and family-preserved privileges, did not leave much room for rewarding talent, and it was connections, rather than abilities, that were likely to help one along. At sixteen, Nanpo was taken

⁵⁶⁷ 年号は 安く永くと かはれども 諸式高くて 今に明和九. The anonymous author resists the change of the era name from Meiwa (明和) to Anei (安永) during the ninth year of the former. The new era name was composed of auspicious characters for “peaceful”/“easy” (also meaning “inexpensive”) plus “eternal”, but the author slyly insists that not only are prices on the rise, it is still Meiwa 9, whose sound is homophonous with “trouble” (*meiwaku*).

⁵⁶⁸ This account of Nanpo’s youth and psychological development derives largely from Iwasaki (1984).

under the wing of Hiraga Gennai, the brilliant inventor, scientist and scholar—and composer of comic fiction in which he expressed his disappointment with the arbitrariness of the social order, which had failed to reward him for his efforts. Although Nanpo never succumbed to Gennai's bitterness, he was clearly influenced by this relationship and the example of the cynical older man of genius. In the year after his first meeting with Gennai, Nanpo seems to have undergone a period of soul-searching, wandering about Edo, drinking and writing the “mad” Chinese poems (*kyōshi*) and prose pieces (*kyō-kanbun*) that filled *Neboke sensei bunshū* (寝惚け先生文集), his first comic work. Nanpo's narcoleptic, sleep-talking alter-ego has been said to be both the antithesis of the clear-headed, hard-working scholar, who had published two books by age 18, as well as his desperate fantasy of escape to a worry-free life, perhaps even a death wish.⁵⁶⁹ The Edo world of play, in short, was not just a light diversion for men satisfied and at home with their places in the world, but rather also an outlet for the frustration of people of talent who were, for reasons of class, gender or upbringing, not appreciated and utilized by society. This “mad” realm of learned silliness, convention-defying wit, and willful illogicality, in which participants competed to outdo one another in displaying the wonderfulness of their wasted resources (education, inventiveness, skill) was ultimately a parody of irrational society itself, its façade of reason stripped away and its “madness” brought to the surface. But let there be no mistake: it was also great fun.

With this last, simple-minded point, I wish to stress opposition to those who evaluate *gesaku* on mainly moral grounds, as the frivolous expenditure of energies and talents that could have been gainfully employed for the betterment of society.⁵⁷⁰ It is

⁵⁶⁹ Iwasaki (1984), 54. But he was also the model for that easy brilliance, flowing effortlessly from an unclouded mind, idealized in *gesaku*.

⁵⁷⁰ *Gesaku* was rejected, along with other Edo literary works with a playful use of language, by the progressive writers of the Meiji Period, who wished to revitalize Japanese literature according to Western models, including a more transparent use of language. This rejection carried over into the

curious that most modern societies respect displaced, out-of-step artists, who bury themselves in single-minded devotion to their work, whatever its nature, but not intellectuals who give themselves over to a literature of mockery, inquiring: if they were so displeased with their society, why didn't they do more than talk? What a curious double standard this is, that on the one hand can romantically idolize those artists who aim at nothing but pleasing the senses with images of beauty, with no rationally worked out social agenda, while on the other dismissing the delights of artistic play and extravagant silliness in literature as worthless. In modern times we demand that writers make a point of showing that they are seriously engaged and personally invested in their work, as we seek to take their writings as pure reflections of individual interiority. *Gesaku* authors have by this standard been dismissed as emotionally immature, not capable of straight-faced involvement, partly for the literary stance they take, subscribing to a shifting world of irrationality and inversion, where laughter takes the place of the ponderous statement as the means of making a point. But more damning than that is their subscription to their own lightness, their self-effacement and humility, as in those closing "author portraits" that depict the writer with a blank face, denying interiority. Pen names that assert the author's lack of

twentieth century. Examining the reasons for this critical dismissal in his *Gesaku-ron* of 1966, the pioneering scholar of Edo literature Nakamura Yukihiro found that the principles on which *gesaku* are based are antithetical to those of modern literature, arguing that they offer no insights into human nature, no developed characters, no sense of realism, and no serious confrontation with self or society. Instead, *gesaku* have a carefree mood, stereotyped characters and situations, and frivolous approach to reality, more interested in word games than personal expression. As a result, it has been difficult for *gesaku* and its scholars to gain respectability, as Sumie Jones noted in a 1992 talk (*Oboegaki*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 8), describing how even at a major Edo studies institution like Waseda University, advanced students who wished to study *gesaku* were encouraged to do theses on an accepted author like Saikaku, for the sake of their careers. In the U.S., Donald Keene set the approach for *gesaku* conservatively when he called them "essentially frivolous," not genuinely concerned with the realities of the world, and using moral statements only superficially as the justification for storytelling (1976, 410-411). But more recent studies by James Araki, Leon Zolbrod, Haruko Iwasaki, Sumie Jones and Adam Kern, among others, have brought out more redeeming aspects of *gesaku*, in which sometimes the lack of seriousness itself is a serious challenge to social norms, the work deeply engaged with the politics of the time, and the stiff morals in titles, openings and conclusions protective covers for otherwise deeply subversive fiction. There was a reason, after all, for the banning of *gesaku* and the imprisonment of Santō Kyōden, and it was neither frivolity nor lack of concern with the real world.

value or care are scarcely more likely to impress the modern critic, who has subsequently assumed that because there was no place established for this sort of fiction, and its composers were not considered professional authors, they therefore must have treated their work as merely throwaway scraps of meaningless entertainment. But I mean to say that we have taken these writers too literally at their words, missing the self-aggrandizement in their clever denial of personal value, and the serious messages in the “mad” content of their work. Nor should we swing to the other extreme and find the world of *gesaku* as inhabited only by frustrated would-be political leaders, spewing out their rancor in nonsense. There can be no doubt that the Edo realm of play was in part motivated by frustration, but the release of that frustration was clearly experienced as joy and meaning, perhaps at times a vindictive delight in carving the arbitrariness of the social order to shreds, but also with the exuberance of the confident denial of accepted norms, a pleasurable expansion of mental possibilities that went beyond contemporary politics, into the philosophical realm.

Maintaining correct balance in regard to the practitioners of *gesaku* thus means nothing less than taking their comedy seriously, while not allowing that seriousness to dull the comic qualities of their work. More specifically, it is an exploration of their cultivated “madness,” and what this condition implies about their relation to conventional society. The “mad” poets and fiction writers of *gesaku* took what might be called a recluse stance toward their situation, but one in sharp distinction from the traditional sense of the withdrawn literati in China. Like the Chinese recluse-scholar, these “mad” authors were people of education and quick intelligence whose unique skills were not recognized and meaningfully employed by their society. But whereas the traditional recluse stance was one of withdrawal to the delights of poetry and art, embracing the private values of friendship, simple living in nature and an elegant

engagement with the structures of high culture, the Edo *bunjin* mode was a complex anomaly, engagement through withdrawal and inversion. Japanese utilizations of the Chinese literati ideal had always been somewhat skewed due to differing historical and social circumstances, specifically the Chinese examination system and importance of a landed gentry.⁵⁷¹ In eighteenth century Japan, employing the literati ideal meant merely engrossing oneself in the idealized world of Chinese poetry and painting as a way of transcending vulgar reality and achieving personal cultivation, rather than any actual withdrawal from the crass negotiations of social life. Buson, while a quintessential eighteenth century *bunjin*, was very much involved in his urban social world, openly concerned with money and power, but periodically escaping to a realm of pure art through the employment of Chinese aesthetics. The ‘mad’ Edo *bunjin*, a new variation on the recluse-scholar theme, also stayed in society, but rather than transcending or ignoring the vulgar world in art, swallowed this world to the very core, and made *it* essential, withdrawing instead from the purity of idealization. All of the education received, all of the skills and knowledge of high culture, be it Chinese prose, poetry or history, or the classical arts and lore of the imperial court, were thrown down into the muck of the world, as though to say: if this is the level where you have deigned me to live, then I will camp right here, just as I am. Within this inversion, moreover, was a mockery of the very structure of Tokugawa society, which assumed levels of ability corresponding to position and class, and limited individual possibilities accordingly, as well as a glorious transcendence of these limits, by people very much grounded in the mundane. The various arts of “madness,” then, were a withdrawal from sanctioned social ideals, but not from society, a retreat to a realm of art, but not to the arts of quietude or elegance. Rather, the wasted talents of the “mad”

⁵⁷¹ See the preface and introduction to Joan Stanley-Baker’s *The Transmission of Chinese Idealist Painting to Japan* (University of Michigan, 1992), xiii-xviii and 1-23, for a fuller account of how Japanese *bunjinga* painting differs in context and practice from its Chinese model.

Edo *bunjin* were turned to a scathing (but pointedly knowledgeable) inversion of everything for which traditional knowledge stood.

One of the first things to be parodied, of course, was seriousness itself. This is not merely to make the conventional claim that Edo *kyōka* poets ridiculed everything indiscriminately, including their own positions as ridiculers (which is to say that they had no position at all), but rather to see Edo silliness and illogicality as pointedly undermining one of the main supports on which society rested, the solemn investment of personal integrity in a rationally ordered reality in which one could believe. Edo *kyōka* was not born from absolute nihilism, but rather a determined, if self-undermining, belief in the values of silliness and free floating identities themselves, with a passionate distaste for their opposites. Nanpo, for example, though said to have originally resisted the idea of *kyōka awase*, as having a grandeur out of keeping with the form, soon warmed to the idea, seeming to realize the potential for ridiculing respected structures through their wanton employment for frivolous content. Nowhere was his challenge to seriousness as a rudimental principle of culture and society more apparent than in the *Takara Awase* (宝合せ・“Treasure Gathering”) Party of 1774.⁵⁷² Here, straight faces, serious demeanor and formal dress were all part of the highly structured proceeding, the very solemnity of which mocked the basis by which society determines value. In this performance event, which must have been carefully planned out in advance, Nanpo and his esteemed colleagues descended on an Edo temple, where they surprised onlookers by ritually presenting a series of “treasures” (in fact worthless bric-a-brac) with pompous speeches that made a mishmash of history and lore to explain their importance. Some of Nanpo’s approach was derived from

⁵⁷² Nanpo himself describes this as having taken place in 1773. The *Takara awase ki* (宝合記) was published in 1774. For the complete text and images of this send-up, see Kobayashi, Fumiko, *Kyōbun Takara awase ki* (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 2000.)

classical literature—particularly that section of *Tsurezuregusa* (徒然草) in which an absurd collector, on being told that his “treasure” could not possibly be in the hand of the calligrapher to whom it was attributed, dead long before the work inscribed was composed, then values his ‘miraculous’ piece all the more—but this literature was also the target of its parody. Finding the importance of things by tracing their lineage back to the monuments of cultural history, Nanpo’s event demonstrates, is absurd. Because it leads us to value sheer junk as treasures, to take seriously the most ridiculous things, the very method and underlying structure of cultural evaluation, based on a pious appreciation of revered history, requires critical examination.

Nanpo’s *Takara awase* also represents his increasing distance from Hiraga Gennai 平賀源内, whose *bussankai* (物産会 • exhibits of natural resources), along with temples’ moneymaking exhibits of their treasures, were parodied in the form of the meeting. Although something of Gennai’s righteous anger was embedded in the mockery that drove this event, Nanpo’s literary stance was gradually shifting the balance between “madness” driven by bitterness, in favor of a sheer, mad delight in the shifting structures of absurd reality, of the kind that underlie the “logic” of the *Takara awase* texts. Both of these elements had been present in Gennai’s texts, as he utilized and elaborated on the lowly forms of the world to create outrageous satires, especially in *Fūryū Shidōken-den* (風流志道軒伝 • “Biography of the Fashionable Shidōken”) and *Hōhiron* (放屁論 • “Theories on Farting”). But Nanpo’s *Takara awase*, playful and crazy as its justifications for the pious treatment of bric-a-brac may have been, contains an element of literal truth that radically alters Gennai’s construction: the common forms of the contemporary world *are* precisely those we should value, albeit for different reasons than those by which value is conventionally established. Nanpo’s delight in the world around him was always tinged with a shade of irony, but unlike Gennai, he did not use the contemporary as a corrupt lens through

which the distortion of higher principles in the modern world could be seen—ultimately a traditional, Neo-Confucianist approach—rather appreciating the sheer materiality of things, just for what they were. This transformation seems to have begun with his *Ameuri Dohei-den* (飴売り 土兵伝) “A Biography of Dohei the Candyman”), which started as a Gennai-esque critique of human lusts and hungers, ala *Fūryū Shidōkenden*, but grew into an open appreciation of the sensuous structures of contemporary life. Nanpo’s world affirming stance, in fact the very opposite of Gennai’s moral critique, shines through clearly in the following *kyōka*, which inverts a classical *waka* tinged with Buddhist pessimism:

<i>Kaku bakari</i>	Things as they are
<i>Medetaku miyuru</i>	In this world
<i>Yonaka wo</i>	Appearing so celebratory
<i>Urayamashiku ya</i>	Moon beams
<i>Nozoku tsukikage</i>	Peer down on us enviously ⁵⁷³

Understanding Nanpo’s “treasuring” of the low forms of immediate reality, we can read his attempts to knock the classical model from its pedestal, as in the poem above or at his *Takara awase*, as nothing other than an effort to center the contemporary world as the main locus of meaning and importance. In *kyōka*, this could be accomplished in several ways, often overlapping in the same poems. First, classical structures could be maintained, but redefined according to their present day employment in the world of common men, for example, this poem on the sacred New Year season:

<i>Namayoi no</i>	When I see
<i>Reisha wo mireba</i>	The drunken celebrants
<i>Daidō wo</i>	Stumbling down the great road
<i>Yokosujikai ni</i>	From side street to side street
<i>Haru kinikeri</i>	I know: Spring has come ⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁷³ かくばかりめでたく見ゆる世の中をうらやましくやのぞく月影. *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, vol. 47, 438, where it is compared with the original verse, from the *Shūiwakashū*, reading: ***Kaku bakari*** / *Hegataku miyuru* / *Yononaka ni* / ***Urayamashiku*** *mo* / *Sumeru tsuki kana*. “Things as they are / In this world / Seeming so hard to get through / I envy / the moon’s serenity.”

There is nothing here of overt criticism, feigned or actual, as in Kikaku's "who pissed on this year's first snow?" but rather a recognition that the happenings of city life, humble as they may be, now calibrate the seasonal calendar. Certainly the celebrants seem to care more about the next drink than plum blossoms or the other traditional pleasures of spring, but Nanpo accepts this as natural and normal. This acceptance raises the second point: *kyōka* could take its material solely from humble life, filling the classical *waka* form with subject matter entirely out of keeping with its original elegance, thus lampooning the classical structure. Nanpo's sympathy for the plight of common people is expressed in yet another poem on the New Year theme:

<i>Kure take no</i>	For the average person
<i>Yo no hito nami ni</i>	In this thin bamboo world
<i>Matsu tatete</i>	Standing up a pine
<i>Yabure shōji wo</i>	And fixing the torn screens
<i>Haru kinikeri</i>	Means that spring has come ⁵⁷⁵

Here, the poem starts in the realm of high poetry with a classical epithet (*makura kotoba*), but plunges down to the common world in the last two lines, smashing the false idealization of reality in *waka*. There is nothing here of beauty or elegance, just life as it is really lived by most people. The third and most extreme stance, as in Nanpo's "envious moon" poem, does not retain the classical structure, locating it in the common world, or merely lampoon its aura and ideals, but pointedly overturns or smashes the classical idea, denying its applicability to the reality of the present.

The Edo *kyōka* project, if one can define it in such a unified way, was thus a systematic destruction of classical forms and their replacement with modern, but

⁵⁷⁴ 生酔の礼者をみれば大道を横すぢかひに春はきにけり。 Ibid, 455, no.34. Nanpo describes the scene of well wishers going from house to house, taking toasts with friends, as a traditional poet might of the emergence of plum blossoms, as the sure sign that spring has arrived.

⁵⁷⁵ くれ竹の世の人なみに松たててやぶれ障子を春は来にけり。 Ibid, 454, no.32. *Kure take* is a *makura kotoba* epithet for *yo*, with *take* providing a seasonal *engo* for *matsu*. The last line opens with a pun, *haru* meaning "spring" and "stretch," as in applying new paper to the screen frames.

accomplished specifically by using the classical structure itself, in relation to radically different content. This very utilization, however, which relied on the “classical aura” to give the comic poem its effect, ultimately served to retain the traditional structures, as an essential sounding board, and the very context in which *kyōka* made sense. As such, we must see that Edo *kyōka* was not such a radical rejection of the past as has been claimed, but a past-oriented and even past-obsessed form, which was less interested in letting go of or moving on from the high classical structure than in simply haranguing it. The pedestal, in other words, was repeatedly knocked and rocked, but never overturned, or more profoundly yet, ignored. One might find a political parallel here in the stance of satirical *rakushu* or *ukiyo-e*, which delighted in criticizing the government, but had no serious ideas about replacing it. This analysis is not to dismiss the importance of satirical forms like *kyōka*, for ridicule of the celebrated model through its employment in an inverted manner can be seen as the first step to moving beyond it. But we must recognize that *kyōka* itself never did, that keeping the classical structure intact, even if through the back door, was the very means by which the form operated. *Kyōka* was in fact a parasitic form, unable to survive on its own, but burying into and inhabiting the classical *waka* as its own body, taking its structure, devices and celebrated examples as the basis for its own composition.⁵⁷⁶ The vaunted past, moreover, was absolutely necessary for it, both as an opponent with which to do battle, specific classical ideals stimulating particular compositions against them, and as the background for making *kyōka* seem significant, not an ungrounded form, but one, additionally, that showed the very knowledge and qualities of its composer. Whereas the former part of this requirement allowed *kyōka* to deconstruct the past, the latter explicitly demanded that the past never be completely undone, for if it were,

⁵⁷⁶ In this aspect, *kyōka* is different from *senryū*, the comic form almost contemporaneous with it, helping to explain why *senryū* continues to be made to this day, while *kyōka* died out completely in the early twentieth century.

kyōka itself would become meaningless.⁵⁷⁷ Implicitly, then, whatever its satirical qualities, Edo *kyōka* was invested in keeping the vaunted past alive. This undercurrent in even its most lambaste moments helps to explain the particular kind of *kyōka* that developed in the nineteenth century, more interested in reviving the classical past for contemporary purposes than in beating it down.

We can identify, in fact, two streams of Edo *kyōka* even in early productions. Nor is this merely a division in style between the *gesaku*-leaning Yomo and Akera groups versus the *wagaku*-leaning groups of Kisshū and Mokuami, but a duality that exists within these affiliations. Some of Kisshū's *kyōka*, intentionally or not, have more bite than he is typically credited with, while poets who have been classified as *kyōka*'s wildest and most brutally satirical also have their intellectual, softer moments. The lighter side of *kyōka* has been glimpsed already in the picture-driven 1770 *kyōka awase*, and a taste of the darker in *rakushū* anger or Nanpo's earthy subject matter. But the split is more than one of poetic subject or emotion. An obsession with money, for example, is one of the most common themes in early Edo *kyōka*, implicitly hinting at a political world out of balance, which is not caring properly for the average person, while expressly itself showing such concern—but also delighting in bringing together worldly reality with the non-economic classical poetic ideal. Akera Kankō, considered a more worldly and vulgar poet than Nanpo, brings these realms together in a verse with a tone much sharper than that of the Meiwa *kyōka awase*:

<i>Shakkin mo</i>	My debts, like my balls,
<i>Ima tsutsumu ni</i>	Though I try to wrap them up
<i>Tsutsumarezu</i>	Can't be hidden
<i>Yaburekabure no</i>	In this dirty, torn loincloth
<i>Fundoshi no kure</i>	At the close of a shitty year ⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁷ Indeed, this is precisely what happened to *kyōka* historically, as classical poetry in the modern period ceased to be a requisite of knowledge, and poetry in general a universal basis for social interaction, leaving it without legs to stand on.

⁵⁷⁸ 借金も今つゝまれずやぶれかぶれのふんどのしの暮. *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, vol. 47, 483, no. 130. The key wordplay that gives rise to the imagery is the *kin* of *shakkin* in the first line, which

But Kankō, like other Edo *kyōka* poets, only rarely reaches these heights of satirical intensity. More often, his worldly, economic vision is embedded in classical imagery, with more pedantic humor:

<i>Kōgane no</i>	These plums that ripen
<i>Iro to miru made</i>	Until they appear
<i>Juku shitaru</i>	The color of gold
<i>Ume wa motoyori</i>	Were originally
<i>Kotsubu narikeri</i>	Little nugget buds ⁵⁷⁹

Although the highlights of early Edo *kyōka* are clearly in the heavier category, historically speaking, the latter, seemingly less-inspired type of poem should not be ignored, for these comprise a significant segment of *kyōka* practice, which will become yet more important as *kyōka* grows in popularity. Moreover, moving ahead to the transition from *kyōka* “event” as performance in the world to performance in the medium of print, we will see that Edo *kyōka* explicitly played up its celebrated history in relation to classical poetry, offering many of these more mundane poems as models for composition.

The breakthrough of *kyōka* practice to mass notoriety, after the relatively small and private gatherings of the 1770s, came in the early 1780s with the publication of several major *kyōka* anthologies. The decision to publish was momentous, and in part represents a relinquishing of that intensely personal spirit of purity, achieved by independence from larger society, that made *kyōka* so different from *senryū* (川柳), the wholly comic version of haikai. *Senryū*, practiced in Edo at roughly the same time as *kyōka*, but preceding it in publications and popularity, was a form that had

contextually summons “testicles”. The final line is a bridge: *toshi no kure* (“end of the year”, when debts come due) and *fundoshi*, “loincloth”, which could be subdivided into *fun* (“animal feces”) and *toshi* (“year”).

⁵⁷⁹ 黄金の色と見るまで熟したる梅はもとより小粒なりけり. Ibid, 480 no.118. The poet sees money even in the forms of nature. Golden plums, he explains, are so because they began as *kotsubu*, “little buds” or “small nuggets [of gold]”

developed directly out of economic practices, the *maekuzuke* (前句付・“verse-capping”) sessions that supported *haikai* masters, for which participants could submit entries for a fee.⁵⁸⁰ These verse cap contests were exercises in wit and cleverness, for which a master would present two lines of seven syllables, and the masses would compete to add lines of 5-7-5 that transformed them to insightful humor, with prizes awarded to the winners. Gradually it became clear that the first, formulaic lines were often not necessary in understanding the verses added, and a serial anthology, *Yanagidaru* (柳樽), began to be published as a list of winning verses that could stand alone, giving birth to *senryū* as a distinct genre. These expressions of Edo wit had a clear influence on *kyōka*, particularly in the plebian subject matter and ethos utilized by Nanpo and Kankō, as seen in the examples above, but *kyōka* always differed from *senryū* in its reliance on classical poetry, both as models for composition and for the techniques it employed. Specifically, whereas *senryū* aimed at making simple, direct (but ironic) statements regarding a particular situation in human life, sharply revealing comic truths regarding the psychologies, foibles and self-contradictory behaviors of ordinary human beings and their constructed world, *kyōka*, although also frequently insightful, were rarely if ever direct, and frequently aimed more at absurdity—twisted truths achieved through clever language usage—than revelation. Unlike the plain language of *senryū*, then, *kyōka* almost always employed some classical literary device, be it *makura kotoba* (epithets), *honkadori* (allusive variation), *engo* (related words) or *kakekotoba* (bridge words), giving words layers and vague or multiple meanings, entirely unlike the clarity of *senryū*’s biting discoveries. Put metaphorically, *kyōka* is a richly layered, evocative mist; *senryū* a crisp, cool breeze.

Let’s compare samples from each genre on a related theme, nightfall in Yoshiwara:

⁵⁸⁰ In fact, the form was named after the leading *maezuke* master of the time, Karai Senryū (1718-1790).

<i>Yo no naka wa</i>	When night falls
<i>Kurete kuruwa wa</i>	On the world, it's high noon
<i>Hiru ni nari</i>	In the pleasure quarters ⁵⁸¹
<i>Yoshiwara no</i>	At the Yoshiwara
<i>Yomise wo haru no</i>	Women are showing their goods
<i>Yūgure wa</i>	This spring evening--
<i>Iriai no kane ni</i>	Flowers blooming
<i>Hana ya sakuran</i>	With the vesper bells ⁵⁸²

The *senryū* is a simple statement of ironic inversion, commenting on the reversal of day and night in the brothels, though metaphorically also revealing a commonly unnoticed inverse relationship: the moral decline of the world means the flourishing of the pleasure quarters. But its language is clear and unambiguous: there is only one literal meaning that can be applied to each of its words, and only one figurative meaning following that. Nanpo's poem, by contrast, is an allusive variation on a celebrated *waka* by Nōin Hōshi,⁵⁸³ and includes bridge words as well. How, for example, are we to read the second and third lines of Nanpo's poem? *Mise wo haru* means women lined up to attract customers, but *yomise* means a shop that does business at night, while *haru* also does double duty as "spring" by connecting to the next line, the *haru no yūgure* taken directly from Nōin's poem. We could read this either as "spring dusk falls on the night shops of the Yoshiwara" or, forcing the homophonous reading "world" onto the opening of the second line, "In the world of the Yoshiwara, this dusk of women for sale...." The meaning is doubled and indeterminate, and for the poem to work, the reader must recognize that its words can be read both ways, allowing them to float, without demanding literal singularity. Moreover, unlike the *senryū*, the inversion at the end of Nanpo's poem is only

⁵⁸¹ 世の中は暮れて郭は昼になり *Haifū yanagidaru shūi*, Vol. 6, 1797.

⁵⁸² 吉原の夜店をはるの夕ぐれは入相の鐘に花さくらん. *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, vol. 47, 456, no. 39.

⁵⁸³ *Yamazato no / Haru no yūgure / Kite mireba / Iriai no kane ni / Hana zo chiri keru*. "Coming to view / The mountain village / At nightfall in spring / Blossoms fall / With the ringing of the vesper bells."

recognizable if one knows the original he is quoting, wittily transforming “falling blossoms” to “blooming flowers,” wistful sadness to celebration, in reference to the beautiful women. In short, Nanpo’s poem has less semantic clarity than the *senryū*, relying on doubled meanings and recognition of a specific source outside of but structuring its choices of words, in order that its world-affirmation be understood, but the very vagueness of these layers and shadowed meanings creates its allusive, poetic effect. This “softness” of signification, moreover, in contrast to the crystal clarity of the *senryū*, is what allows this sort of poetry to be picked up and meaningfully integrated with illustration, particularly the flashy *ukiyo-e* style, which like *kyōka* often borrowed from classical material to create its wit and significance.⁵⁸⁴

Returning to the first Edo *kyōka* publications of the early 1780s, we can now regard these as the entry of *kyōka* into the world of comic poetry publishing already set up and made popular by *senryū*, noting too the speed with which *kyōka* will be picked up by *ukiyo-e* illustration. But the different approach *kyōka* applied, with more of a puzzle or riddle effect than *senryū*, and more obviously classical references and subject matter, helped to take *kyōka* to unprecedented heights of popularity. *Kyōka* had already been gradually spreading among those in the know, seeping into those twin arteries of Edo popular culture, the kabuki theater and the pleasure quarters, but within months of the appearance of the first *kyōka* anthology, literally thousands were caught up in a *kyōka* craze. *Kyōka* was by nature a type of *gesaku* that did not require a publisher or extended efforts and ideas to participate in, inviting broader participation than fictional forms. But another important element of this popularity was based on the form of one of the initial anthologies, Nanpo’s *Manzai kyōkashū* (万

⁵⁸⁴ Nanpo himself contrasted the directness, thinness and simplicity of *haikai* (which includes *senryū* as a subgenre) with the rich layers of *kyōka* in the following verse, making reference to the lead poem of a famous *kasen* by Bashō: “Even the *haikai* monkey’s straw raincoat—nowadays, it seems to want *kyōka* robes!”

載狂歌集・“The Ten Thousand Year *Kyōka* Collection”)⁵⁸⁵ of New Year, 1783, which came out just weeks after Kisshū’s *Kyōka wakanashū* (狂歌若葉集・“The New Herb *Kyōka* Collection”), in obvious competition with it. Nanpo’s anthology, a parody of the twelfth century *Senzai wakashū* (千載和歌集・“Thousand Year *Waka* Collection”), aped it in layout, with poetic subjects arranged in the same order as this classic. Moreover, Nanpo did not merely introduce the *kyōka* of the present day, but placed contemporary poets, including a leading actor and courtesan, side by side with older, revered poets who also composed in this form, giving Edo *kyōka* the veneer of an ancient practice, and implying that modern poets were just as good as classical. *Senryū* may have promised its successful participants small prizes for their input, and publication along with their fellows, but Nanpo’s structure for his *kyōka* anthology, imbued with his view of the modern world and the submission of the classical ideal to it, promised participants something more, a chance for immortality, side by side with poetic greats. *Kyōka*, unlike *senryū*, thus immediately became a form with a distinguished lineage, in which contemporaries could participate just by composing.⁵⁸⁶ Nanpo’s anthology scored a conspicuous victory over Kisshū’s, influencing the direction of the Edo *kyōka* movement for the next several years, but this does not necessarily imply that it was primarily his *gesaku*-leaning *kyōka* style that was the source or focus of the favorable attention.

For most Edoites, in fact, *Manzai kyōkashū* served as nothing less than their introduction to the *kyōka* form, which had only rarely been put into print before. The anthology was an opportunity, therefore, to create an impression of *kyōka* as an

⁵⁸⁵ *Manzai* also hinted at the itinerant New Year performers who traveled house to house to sing and dance for some reward, again combining elite ideal and plebian practice, as well as a seasonally appropriate reference for the release of this “entertaining” collection.

⁵⁸⁶ Iwasaki (1984): “Participation in this literature seems to have meant for them an admittance into a ‘fictional’ community of playful writers, formed in defiance of the banality of life.” (173)

important form with a rich history. The work opens, for example, with Matsunaga Teitoku, in a verse typical of Edo *kyōka*'s playful eroticism:

<i>Saohime no</i>	Princess Sao's
<i>Suso fukikaeshi</i>	Skirt hem blown back:
<i>Yawaraka na</i>	A tender landscape
<i>Keshiki wo soso to</i>	Revealed in a flash
<i>Misuru harukaze</i>	By spring breezes ⁵⁸⁷

Nampō also quotes several poems from *Hyakushu kyōka* (the earliest self-proclaimed collection of *kyōka*) attributed to its purported compiler, Gyōgetsuō 暁月房 (1265-1328):

<i>Sakazuki wa</i>	This lover of drink
<i>Megurite yuku wo</i>	Goes round and round
<i>Kirigirisu</i>	The cricket, crying
<i>Tare ni sase toka</i>	"Who'd like some more?"
<i>Naki akasuran</i>	All through the night ⁵⁸⁸

The subtle movement back and forth, from past to present, continues with this late sixteenth century verse by Yuchōrō 雄長老 (1547-1602):

<i>Uri ni kuru</i>	If I'd known theirs was good enough
<i>Hodo wo shitoeba</i>	To come around selling
<i>Waga sono no</i>	Then the "warbler herb"
<i>Uguisuna tote</i>	In my garden
<i>Ne koso takakere</i>	Would be really expensive ⁵⁸⁹

These are far from the best poems in *Manzai kyōkashū*, but mediocre verses served both to inspire composition, and to play up the sharper wit of present day poets by

⁵⁸⁷ 棹姫の裾吹きかえし柔らかな景色をそそとみする春風. Tsukamoto, Tetsuzō, Ed. *Kokon ikyokushū, Manzai kyōkashū, Tokuwaka go manzaishū* (Tokyo: Yūhōdō, 1918), 231. Saohime, the Goddess of Spring, is often transfigured onto the spring landscape, the mists said to be her skirt. This Saohime verse is notably more salacious than a similar Teitoku composition that has been singled out to contrast him with Sōkan, who had described Saohime's moist skirt (the mist) as a result of her squatting to urinate. See Shirane (1998), 53-57. Here the wind blowing away the mist, revealing the landscape, is compared to a woman's kimono hem being blown back, revealing soft legs. This kind of verse is related to the *ukiyo* imagery popular in Edo and Edoza *haikai*.

⁵⁸⁸ 杯はめぐりて行くをきりぎりすたれにさせとか鳴き明かすらん. Ibid, 268.

⁵⁸⁹ 売りに来るほどをしとえば我が園の鶯菜とて値こそ高れ. Ibid, 235. *Uguisuna*, literally "warbler herb", was actually the droppings of the warbler, which were collected, ground to a powder and sold as a cosmetic for whitening the face.

contrast. Although it has been claimed that “no direct connection existed between the Edo *kyōka* and the earlier *kyōka*; it developed as a quite distinct art,”⁵⁹⁰ the influential *Manzai kyōkashū* pointedly integrates Edo *kyōka* into a tradition of “madcap verse.” Even if this was merely for purposes of institutionalizing contemporary verse practices, the example of the *Manzai kyōkashū*, acting as a guide for composition for subsequent poets, made these connections quite real. This will be of importance as we trace the development of *kyōka* into the nineteenth century.

The next landmark “event” in commercially published form was the 1786 *Tenmei shinsen gojūnin isshu: Azumaburi kyōka bunkō* (天明新選五十人一首—東振狂歌文庫・“Fifty Fresh Poets of the Tenmei Era [1780-1789], One Poem Each: The Library of Eastern Style [Edo] *Kyōka*”), which marked the commercial unification of *ukiyo-e* and *kyōka*. These two genres, as I have several times suggested, were intimately suited to one another, both being colorful, flashy forms that represented the present day world in an idealized manner, sometimes employing classical models to give aura to contemporary figures and situations. A number of *ukiyo-e* artists were also *kyōka* poets, most notably the illustrator of the 1786 *Gojūnin isshu*, Kitao Masanobu 北尾政信 (penname: Santō Kyōden), and its famous publisher Tsutaya Jūzaburo 蔦屋重三郎 (*kyōka* name: Tsuta no Kakomaru, “Hidden in Ivy”), as well as the great Kitagawa Utamaro (*kyōka* name: Fude no Ayamari “An Error of the Brush”). The meeting of these genres then, is hardly surprising, but some of its results were unexpected. In pictorial, as well as editorial form, for example, *Gojūnin isshu* was based on printed versions of Fujiwara Teika’s *Hyakunin isshu* (百人一首・“One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each”), the best-known classical collection in the Tokugawa Period, thus enshrining contemporary figures in a format traditionally reserved for past masters. Humbly, and also for practical reasons, this work presented

⁵⁹⁰ Keene (1976), 517, reflecting the point of view presented by Mizuno Minoru in NKBZ, vol.48 (435).

exactly half that number of poets, all present day figures now, in full color portraits, entertainingly depicting these amateur poets in a variety of ridiculous poses, clothing and situations that parodied illustrations of the classic work, with their poems in fine calligraphy alongside. But the work, in fact, was more about the poets than their poems. The themes of poverty, humility and eccentricity—but elegance and classical gesture despite these—with which the poets identified were all picked up in pictorial form, as in the hidden features and hole-ridden umbrella of one elegant poet, or the mock doubling in this work, where the comic poet in court cap on a kabuki horse, looking back at a fan with an image of Mt. Fuji, stands in for the poet-priest Saigyō 西行法師 (1118-1190), from his famous Fuji poem (Figure 24).⁵⁹¹ Like Nanpo's initial anthology, then, *Gojūnin Isshu* offered the poets captured within it fame and even immortality, and not only with their poetry, but also through personal portraiture. Never before had living poets been presented in such a manner in a public production.

The enterprising publisher Tsutaya Jūzaburo was very much aware of the possibilities for engaging the general public and its desires for recognition in print form through a genre like *kyōka*. In an advertisement in the rear of his 1788 *Ehon mushi erami* (絵本虫撰・“Picture Book of Selected Insects”)—the first of his deluxe illustrated *kyōka* albums, which are considered among the most beautiful books ever made—Tsutaya openly called on the public to submit verses for upcoming albums, on birds, fish and animals, suggesting that these topics would be specified further in the future. Of course, Tsutaya's advertisement may simply have been a ploy to attract interest to his publications, essentially asking the public to remain aware of his movements in the world of print, but regardless of his actual intentions, the effect of such a summons was the same. The print medium, in short, created a public space, a

⁵⁹¹ Trailing on the wind / The smoke of Mount Fuji / Fades in the sky / Moving like my thoughts— / Toward some unknown end. (*Kaze ni nabiku / Fuji no keburu no / Sora ni kiete / Yukue mo shiranu / Waga omoi kana.*) Images of Saigyō gazing at Fuji became a staple in Edo Period art.



Figure 24: Tsuburi no Hikaru (“Shiny Pate”) in the role of Priest Saigyō, riding a kabuki-style horse and gazing back at Mt. Fuji on his upraised fan. Illustration by Kitao Masanobu (Santō Kyōden) from *Tenmei shinsen gojūnin isshu: Azumaburi kyōka bunkō* (天明新選五十人一首：東振狂歌文庫) of 1786. Private Collection.

theater where one could be seen, and auditions were open to the general populace. This was a possibility already explored to some extent in the serial *senryū* anthology *Yanagidaru*, but *kyōka*, having combined with *ukiyo-e*, offered a much more sumptuous stage on which to appear. The idea of having one's poetry printed in a deluxe book of this sort, with illustration by Utamaro and gorgeous materials and printing, must have inspired many amateur poets to new efforts in composition. In fact, Tsutaya's bird volume, the Utamaro illustrated *Momo-Chidori* (百千鳥) of 1791, does in fact seem to have been put together in this way, with assorted verses from many little known poets, rather than from a particular *kyōka* group. In this manner, some thirty *kyōka* poets had their names put up in lights, in one of the finest printed works of their day.⁵⁹²

The more certain way of seeing one's poetry in print was to publish it oneself. In his memoirs, *Yakko dako* (奴師勞之・“The Footman Kite”),⁵⁹³ Nanpo informs us:

Sakanoue Jukune [“Drunken Slumber,” 1725-1784] was the first to take a *kyōka* name, while Ōne no Futoki was the first to issue New Year surimono with *kyōka*.⁵⁹⁴

Nanpo, unfortunately, leaves the details of this first surimono vague, so we do not know the what, when or where of this work, and no extant surimono with poetry by Ōne no Futoki survives. The timing of his comment, however, as well as the early inclusion of Ōne in Kisshū's *kyōka* parties, suggests a date perhaps even in the 1770s,

⁵⁹² Facsimiles of each of these landmark books are available, including versions with notes in English. For *Ehon mushi erami*, see Yasuko Betchaku and Joan Mirviss, eds. *Utamaro: Songs of the Garden*. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum and Viking Press, 1984). For *Momo chidori*, see Julia Meech-Pekarik and James T. Kenney *Utamaro: A Chorus of Birds*. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum and Viking Press, 1981).

⁵⁹³ *Yakko* were the lowest level of samurai retainers, and a frequent object of ridicule in Tokugawa literature and drama. Though frequently arrogant for the distinction of their class, they were considered stupid, petty and corrupt figures, who enjoyed lording it over the little man, just as they were lorded over in samurai affairs. One popular kind of kite depicted the *yakko*, who wished nothing more than to fly high, with his distinctive broad head, angry eyes and extravagant whiskers. Nanpo's title is thus a typical expression of clever *kyōka* self-mockery.

⁵⁹⁴ Ōne no Futoki's dates of birth and death are unknown, but Nanpo notes that he, like Sakanoue Jukune, died before he could see the full glories of the *kyōka* world. See Keyes (1985), 20.

though the oldest extant surimono with *kyōka* dates to 1785. This year, incidentally, is that mentioned by Nanpo as the first for which a kabuki surimono was made:

The actor Ichimura Kakitsu [Uzaemon IX, 1725-1785] took the *kyōka* name Tachibanadayū Motoie. Beginning on 2/18/1785, he substituted for another actor at the Sakaichō Theater, where his dance of the three puppets became a smash hit. To commemorate this occasion, *kyōka* poetry groups sent out three surimono, with 200 copies of each. This marked the beginning of *kyōka* surimono for the kabuki theater.⁵⁹⁵

As Nanpo distinguishes a unique branch of *kyōka* surimono—the kabuki commemoration piece—commencing in 1785, it is fairly certain that *kyōka* surimono in general preceded it, though again we do not know for how long or in what form. Thanks to Roger Keyes, however, we have been able to link one early textual source with an extant work. This is a split format, *kaishi*-size piece, with eight *kyōka* and an explanatory text on one panel, images of leading actors on *ema* votive panels on the other. A New Year, 1789 entry for the Ichimura Theater in the *Kabuki nenpyō* states:

Edo *kyōka* groups asked Katsukawa Shunshō to draw likenesses of five actors: Tosshi [Sawamura Sōjurō III], Okuyama [Asao Tamejūrō], Rokō [Segawa Kikunō III], Tojaku [Iwai Hanshirō IV] and Sanshō [Ichikawa Danjūrō V] and distributed it in 500 copies.⁵⁹⁶

Moreover, this surimono was reproduced as a sketch in *Hana no edo kabuki nendaiki* (華江戸歌舞伎年代記・“A Year Record of Flowery Edo Kabuki”), illustrating events of 1789, making identification of it certain. Keyes has presented a copy of the original, now in private hands, in *The Art of Surimono*.⁵⁹⁷ This piece and its corresponding reference suggests that the “*kyōka* surimono” described in the other quotes may also have been in this large, *kaishi*-style format, appropriated (like group structure, monthly meetings, year-opening events, point-gathering etc.) from *haikai*.

⁵⁹⁵ *Zokuji kosui* (1788), translation from Keyes (1985), 21.

⁵⁹⁶ Ihara Toshirō, Ed., *Kabuki nenpyō*. Tokyo: Iwanami, 1973.

⁵⁹⁷ 1985, 21.

In fact, however, for a poet wishing to have his verses reproduced and distributed, there were two readymade, single-sheet formats for private printing in the late eighteenth century, and *kyōka* attached itself to both. The first of these was of course “surimono,” either the *haikai* original or its popular version as the announcement print, both in the *ōbōshozenshi* (*kaishi*) format, while the other was the miniature calendar print, an after-effect of the Meiwa calendar parties, that began in the 1770s and picked up steam into the 80s and 90s. *Kyōka*, which I have described as a “parasitic” form in regard to its utilization of conventions for its unique purposes, took over both formats, miniature and grand, as its own with apparent simultaneity. The oldest *kyōka* works from 1785, in fact, are in *both* formats, while others follow them in a steady stream into the nineteenth century. This assumption of existing forms, rather than creating a unique form suited to *kyōka*’s nature, produces a rather odd, dual definition for early “*kyōka* surimono”—if we can call them that. On the one hand, large format *kaishi*-like *kyōka* surimono were produced exactly like *haikai* surimono, most often relying on the poetry group as its basis. On the other, miniature “*kyōka* surimono” were made, like calendar prints, primarily on an individual basis, and even with the addition of poetry continued to include calendar information, disguised in design or text. As these works are not in a traditional presentation format for poetry, and appear primarily as *egoyomi*, I argue they are a hybrid form, more accurately identified as “calendar prints with *kyōka*,” or perhaps even “*kyōka egoyomi*,” than “*kyōka surimono*.” But what confuses the matter is the historical trajectory of these forms: while the traditional, *kaishi*-style surimono continues largely unchanged into the nineteenth century, the miniature calendar prints grow in size and complexity to feed into what would become the dominant format for surimono, *kakuban* (square) surimono, bringing some of the calendar aspects with it. With retrospective vision, it is easy to fall into the trap of identifying these calendar prints,

especially those with poetry, as “surimono,” but within this form is a transitional range, from pure *egoyomi*, to *egoyomi* with *kyōka*, to *egoyomi*-like *kyōka* prints without calendar marks, that I believe must be respected. Properly understanding the development of the unique style of *kyōka* surimono that emerges in the first decade of the nineteenth century, therefore, requires distinguishing sharply between the two streams of early *kyōka* usage on private prints, as well as the stages and intermediary steps through which *egoyomi* mutated into *kyōka* surimono.⁵⁹⁸

Seeking an Appropriate Material Body: The Rise of *Kyōka* Surimono

At this point, let me step back again to the aftermath of the Meiwa calendar print exchanges, and the kinds of private publications made after them. Announcement pieces in Edo, which aped *haikai* surimono in every aspect, were typically arranged in split format (text on one side of the central fold, image on the other), and included illustration commissioned from *ukiyo-e* artists. As announcement pieces were the most ephemeral of surimono, little more than souvenirs once the event advertised was over, we know more about them from literary sources than extant works, but one full announcement work, perhaps made as early as 1772, does survive.⁵⁹⁹ This piece (Figure 25) is an invitation to a *jōruri* performance to be held at the Kawachiya restaurant in Ryōgoku on 8/11, 9:30 A.M. “rain or shine,” with a program of the works to be performed, and an illustration of a classical scene on its opposite panel by Katsukawa Shunshō 勝川春章 (1726-1793). As Shunshō

⁵⁹⁸ To this point, critics have simply treated these early surimono as a single body, insisting that surimono could be made in various formats, according to the needs of the commissioners. I believe it is essential to see that *kyōka* took over two distinct traditions, however, resulting in different content and style on large and small surimono.

⁵⁹⁹ Keyes (1985, 371) has suggested the 1772 date based on the name of one of the performers, Toyotake Kanedayū (1731-1779), who is described as having come down to Edo from Ōsaka between 1772-1774. Asano Shūgō, however, without explaining his reasoning, has suggested a date in the early 1780s. In either case, this is one of the first extant announcement surimono. Some surimono with their textual panels removed may also have been announcements originally, but sadly these can only be dated roughly, based on pictorial style, and the nature of the original text portion only surmised from imagery.



Figure 25: A c. 1772 *ōbōshozenshiban* announcement surimono for a performance of *Jōruri* at the theater of Kawachiya Hanjirō, near the Yanagi Bridge in Ryōgoku. List of performers and chants on one fold, illustration of court ladies by Katuskawa Shunshō on the other. Chester Beatty Library.

completed a major set of prints for the *Ise Monogatari* in 1771-2,⁶⁰⁰ with a very similar style to that employed for this work, we can surmise that this was an extension of his popular series into a larger format, lending credence to Keyes' dating. Keyes has also brought our attention, incidentally, to the layout of this work, and how it would have functioned folded. As most of the wear is now on the folds of the textual panel, the work must have been originally folded so that this side, specifically the rightmost thirds of text, faced out. This folded work would then be examined as a book might, with these two panels of text as covers, and the third panel appearing tucked inside, beside a gentle image of bush clover by a swirling stream. Only once the final opening was made would the full image with figures appear, radically altering the viewer's impression of the illustration. This manner of ordered, sequential viewing not only explains some of the preference for the split format in Edo works, but also has a direct relation to the kind of text-image interactions we will see developing on later *kyōka* surimono in this city.

The third type of private publication made in the wake of the influential Meiwa calendar parties was more directly related to them in nature. These were miniature, color printed calendar prints, mostly commissioned by individuals, which are extant from at least 1771.⁶⁰¹ About half the size or less of the original Meiwa *chūban* (中判) calendars,⁶⁰² and generally less elaborate in designs and printing quality, these suggest

⁶⁰⁰ See *Ukiyo-e Geijutsu No. 96* (Nihon Ukiyo-e Kyōkai, 1989), for an article of this series by Asano Shūgō. Also No.100 (1991), for a follow-up on the second half of the series by Tim Clark.

⁶⁰¹ The 1927 exhibition of the Ukiyo-e Society of Japan presented a major group of *egoyomi*, since broken up among different collections. The exhibition list includes eight *egoyomi* for 1771, a total of 47 for the 1770s, and 74 for the 1780s, a remarkable number of extant works. The reason for the gap between the privately printed *egoyomi* of 1766 and their re-emergence in a new format and style in 1771 is not known, though the most likely explanation is a renewed ban on calendar prints (which were technically illegal) in the wake of the popular 1765-66 parties. This theory is supported by the scarcity of prints signed by major artists before 1780. Although calendar prints as a genre do pre-date the 1765-66 exchanges, the majority of these are commercial prints, and it is usually difficult to distinguish the privately commissioned works among them. I have already had occasion to mention *haikai* surimono in calendar form, as well as a 1741 New Year print with calendar marks by Okamura Masanobu.

⁶⁰² A standard *chūban* is approximately 19 by 25 cm. *Egoyomi* ranged greatly in size, and grew larger over their historical progression. Early works are typically 10 by 8, or 10 by 12 cm., later, with the

the transference of the practice of witty calendar print creation to a less elite group of commissioners, though still of a class with the excess capital to pay for such works. Most images on early pieces are unsigned—suggesting that they were designed by the commissioners themselves—or else signed with little known names—suggesting pseudonyms, or else fringe/amateur production—though major *ukiyo-e* artists do begin to participate in the form sporadically from the late 1770s, and regularly by the mid-1780s.⁶⁰³ The alterations wrought by this professional input, moreover, supports the idea that the earlier, anonymous pieces were not simply works by major artists left unsigned, perhaps to avoid legal problems, but truly minor or amateur production. What these early pieces lack in visual qualities, however, they more than make up for in originality and cleverness. In fact, the commissioners of these calendars seemed to have competed with one another primarily in ingenuity, for the most part leaving the *yatsushi* approach of the Meiwa calendars behind, at least in early works, but going far beyond their methods for disguising numbers. Here, large and small month designations were expressed not only with the characters for them, their lines embedded in text or design, but additionally through puns, and collections of 12 (or 13 for years with intercalary months) objects, their arrangements and sizes or qualities defining them as “large” or “small.” These miniature *egoyomi* also make heavier use of the zodiac signs than the calendars for the earlier *daishōkai*, gradually developing clever codes in reference to these signs. As many of the subtle year references, month designations and image types on these calendar prints will be carried over into *kyōka*

addition of *kyōka*, standard sizes increase to 16 by 12 and 13 by 18 cm., with the largest exceptions even slightly exceeding the early Meiwa *egoyomi* in size.

⁶⁰³ One 1771 calendar was designed by Sō Shiseki, but this appears to be an anomaly. The first entrance of prominent *ukiyo-e* artists into the form seems to have been in 1778. Ippitsusai Bunchō, Isoda Koryūsai and Kitao Shigemasa all designed calendar prints for this year. Utagawa Toyoharu joined in from at least 1780. See Happer (1927), nos. 2, 32, 33, 36, 49-53.

surimono in its mature form in the nineteenth century, it is worthwhile giving some close attention to the development of this form.

To date, no reasonable explanation has been given for the patterns of private *egoyomi* production in the Meiwa Period. Over 100 calendars were produced for the calendar parties of 1765, half as many for 1766, then just a trickle to the year 1771, when substantial production resumed. It seems possible that the popularity of the original calendar parties directed unwanted attention to their high-ranking samurai participants, or perhaps a renewed ban on calendar prints had taken effect in response to the brief calendar boom. But certainly the novelty of the 1765 parties was gone in 1766, by which time full color printing had been established as a common commercial practice, so it is possible that the initial interest among *haikai* groups died out of its own accord, to be resurrected later in other hands. Whatever the case, the calendar prints of the 1770s, though sharing some qualities with earlier Meiwa *egoyomi*, are clearly of a different order. This early, 1771 example (Figure 26) is fairly representative in its straightforwardness, depicting a pair of rabbits on a slope with rushes. The year sign, of course, is the hare, and the long and short months found in the height of the rushes, reading from the right (large: 2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 12). Since the pairing of rabbits and rushes is a common theme for 1771, it has been suggested that these works may contain a pun on rush (*tokusa*), which could also be read “profit” (*toku-sa*), a suitable merchant good wish for the New Year.⁶⁰⁴ In addition to zodiac signs, the calendar prints explored and worked out other imagery for the New Year, such as this 1783 image of the *noh* play *Okina* (Figure 27). Here, a wish for longevity is included in the choice of subject, as well as in the pine and bamboo patterns of *Okina*’s robes, which spell out the numbers of the “long” months. The image is quite simple, however—not a contemporary female figure appearing as *Okina*, as the Meiwa

⁶⁰⁴ Four of eight 1771 *egoyomi* in Happer’s 1927 catalogue depict rabbits and rushes. See no. 4.

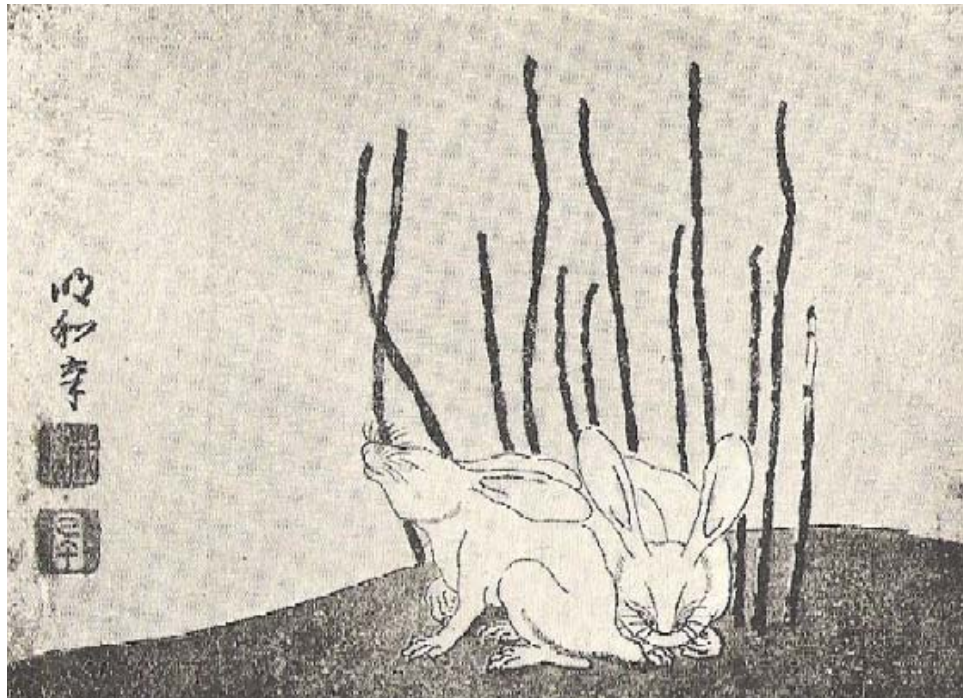


Figure 26: "Rabbits and Rushes." A picture calendar for the New Year of 1771, with the long and short months represented by the length of the rushes. Private Collection.



Figure 27: "Okina Performing the Sambasō Dance." A picture calendar for the New Year of 1783, with the long months disguised in the robe patterns. Chester Beatty Library.

calendars might have had it, but a straightforward representation of a *noh* dancer. This is not to say that the *yatsushi* approach of early calendars was absent, but that it was not obligatory, being found more often in works designed by *ukiyo-e* artists, such as Koryūsai's "Female Daruma" of 1784. In general though, the post-Meiwa calendars were an independent species of work, not slavishly tied to the Meiwa *egoyomi*.

Although the private production of miniature calendars continues unbroken well into the nineteenth century—markedly reducing in quantity, however, as the century progresses—the addition of poetry from the mid-1780s, as well as the input from professional *ukiyo-e* artists, leads to an enhanced complexity of images and their levels of signification. Asano Shūgō has described a 1785 calendar with an illustration by Utamaro depicting Narihira's journey to the east, containing a *kyōka* by none other than Akera Kankō, making this the first known calendar with *kyōka*.⁶⁰⁵ A 1786 calendar, designed by Koryūsai, actually contains a *hokku*, suggesting the potential openness of the *egoyomi* genre to different poetic input.⁶⁰⁶ But it was *kyōka* that was to populate the form most heavily, finding visual and functional correspondences to its poetic approach in *egoyomi*. The addition of *kyōka* on a regular basis did not by any means imply the end of calendar prints without text, which continued to be made in large numbers, suggesting that "calendar prints with *kyōka*" is still a more accurate representation of them at this point than "*kyōka* surimono." Nevertheless, the merger of the two forms brought about changes to *egoyomi*, incorporating *kyōka*-like touches and interests, ultimately even in those examples that contained no *kyōka* at all. Just as one could consider Meiwa calendar prints *haikai*

⁶⁰⁵ This rare surimono is in the Matsuura Shiryō Hakubutsukan in Hirado.

⁶⁰⁶ Keyes (1985), 252, no.218. See also Happer (1927), 17, fig. 3. Some other *egoyomi* have prose inscriptions. In general, however, *kyōka* predominate as texts, likely because they were so suited to the bright spirit of the New Year season and the chronological structure of its festivals, finding the past reborn in contemporary form. We can see, in particular, a transition here from *haikai*'s use of *mitate* to the uses of the past in *kyōka*, another neglected link between these two poetic forms.

surimono without texts, it is possible to consider some of the Tenmei-Kansei (1781-1801) calendar prints this way as well, but now in regard to *kyōka*. This 1787 example includes a reference to *kinkishoga* (琴碁書画 • *koto, go*, calligraphy, painting), the “four accomplishments” deigned requisites for the true person of culture, based on the Chinese model (Figure 28). But the *bunjin* here are *bijin* in the style of the day, and their works represent the numbers for the year (on the right), and a reference to its zodiac sign on the left, in the drawing of the Taoist immortal Huang Chuping (黃初平), who developed the ability to transform goats to stone and back again with a touch of his staff, thus indicating a sheep year. This sort of image, involving multiple references to the structures of established cultural ideals, but filling them with the content of the immediate world, is already close to that found in fully developed surimono, imbued with the qualities of *kyōka*.

Even these brief examples of some of the uses of private printing after the Meiwa calendar parties suggest some of the affinities between them and *kyōka*. For announcement prints, which relied largely on *ukiyo-e* artists for illustration, the preference for classical, quiet scenes, suggesting dignity and elegance, was suited to their occasions and to the historical focus of *kyōka*, just as the *kaishi* format matched its external (formal) classicism. The social practice of *kyōka*, moreover, was based on gatherings for particular events, and early *kyōka* surimono joined representation of poetry groups with announcements of upcoming meetings, utilizing the same *ukiyo-e* artists and style of design, making a seamless transition between prints for parties and those for *kyōka* events. Calendar prints, likewise, though not of the grandeur of the *kaishi*-style announcement piece, also tended towards still lives, scenes from legend or literature, or contemporary scenes overlapped with touches of the classical, the very stuff of *kyōka*. *Egoyomi*, moreover, included “doubling” of the same sort as *kyōka*’s, with puns both visual and verbal, lines of images forming those of numbers, the



Figure 28: “The Four Elegant Arts” (Painting, Go, Calligraphy and Koto), a picture calendar for the New Year of 1787, with the year designation and long months inscribed in the calligraphy. Illustration by Utagawa Toyoharu.

shapes of objects suggesting something other than themselves, or the sounds or appearance of texts hinting at the month designations for the year. Such doubling occurred not only at the formal level, but at the symbolic as well, with images having two levels of representation, typically splitting into present and past, or classical motif and contemporary reference (including zodiac signs). This puzzle quality of *egoyomi* was close to that of *kyōka*, which also demanded “seeing double,” recognizing embedded references and classical models, while its temporal arrangement, relating the vaunted structures of the past to present circumstances, was parallel as well. The addition of *kyōka* to each of these formats occurred smoothly, therefore, without greatly upsetting the nature of these forms as they had existed before the merger. In fact, although I argue that *kyōka*-consciousness added complexity to the *egoyomi* form, it hardly altered the *kaishi*-format surimono at all, and in cases where textual panels have been trimmed away from these early Edo surimono, it is virtually impossible to surmise what kind of work—*haikai*, announcement or *kyōka*—these pieces might originally have been.⁶⁰⁷ Although this difficulty to distinguish content according to image may seem to contradict my assertion that certain types of imagery were intimately suited to certain types of text, in fact, what we find at this point is a melding of ethos between *kyōka*, *haikai* and announcement works in Edo. Such is pointedly not the case, however, with *haikai* composed in the Kamigata region at the same time, which take a distinctive, earthy type of illustration remarkably distinct from Edo’s focus on the elite, rich, youthful, idealized and classical.

Focusing in on the earliest examples of *kyōka* surimono—a term I am using in a limited way at this point, to indicate large, *kaishi*-style presentation sheets with *kyōka* poetry—we can see that *kyōka* proceeded quite differently on each of its

⁶⁰⁷ See, for example, a c.1789 surimono illustration by Shunshō with text removed, no.105 (290) in The Actor’s Image. This work could easily have been an invitation, or it might have contained poetry.

“fronts.” This 1785 *ōbōshozenshi* surimono with illustration by Utamaro, depicting *kyōka* written on the supports of the Eitaibashi bridge seen from water level, is the earliest known *kyōka* work in this format (Figure 29). We might interpret the image as suggesting that the poets represented (Nanpo’s group) were the “pillars” of *kyōka*, though, at this point, the Edo movement did yet have political bite, and the placement of poetry also seems to play up its association with subversive *rakushu*, traditionally furtively written on alley walls or other hidden public spaces. Sampling the poems, however, reveals that they are for the most part quite light, in keeping with the festive New Year:

<i>Haru kasumi</i>	With the spring mist rising--
<i>Tatsumi ya izuko</i>	Which way is southeast?
<i>Sanbashi ni</i>	To the bridge, where our boat arrives
<i>Fune mo tsukuda no</i>	By our familiar water pole,
<i>Minare saohime</i>	Princess Sao of Tsukuda ⁶⁰⁸
--Yomo no Akara	

<i>Odayaka ni</i>	In peace
<i>Uchi-osamarite</i>	And utter calm
<i>Aratama no</i>	This new jewel of spring
<i>Haruka ni kasumu</i>	In the heavy mists
<i>Teppōzu oki</i>	Off the Teppōzu shore ⁶⁰⁹
--Haji no Kakiyasu [“Easily Embarrassed”]	

⁶⁰⁸ はる霞立つやいづこさん橋に舟もつくたのみなれ棹姫. I have re-transliterated (*tatsuyara* to *tatsumi ya*) and retranslated this poem from the version given in Bowie (1979), 30. This light verse is built of related words and bridges, including *kasumi tatsu* (“mist rises”), which goes with Saohime standing (*tatsu*), and *tatsumi*, indicating the southeasterly direction, the *mi* (snake) of which is the zodiac animal of the year. Another pun is on the place name Tsukuda (near the Eitaibashi Bridge) which allows for *fune mo tsuku* (“boats too arrive”). *Minarezao* means a pole standing in water, but *minare* also means “accustomed to seeing,” while the *sao* connects with *hime* (princess) to make Saohime, the Goddess of Spring.

⁶⁰⁹ おたやかのうちおさまりてあら玉のはるかに霞む鉄砲津沖. *Teppō* literally means rifle, *tama* “bullet” and *utsu/uchi* “shoot,” making an embedded contradiction to the assertions of peace and calm. As the calm at the beginning of the year is supposed to signify an era of good rule and plentitude, this is the closest these poems come to political subversion. *Haru* goes with both *aratama no haru* (“new jewel of spring”) and *haruka* (“heavily”).

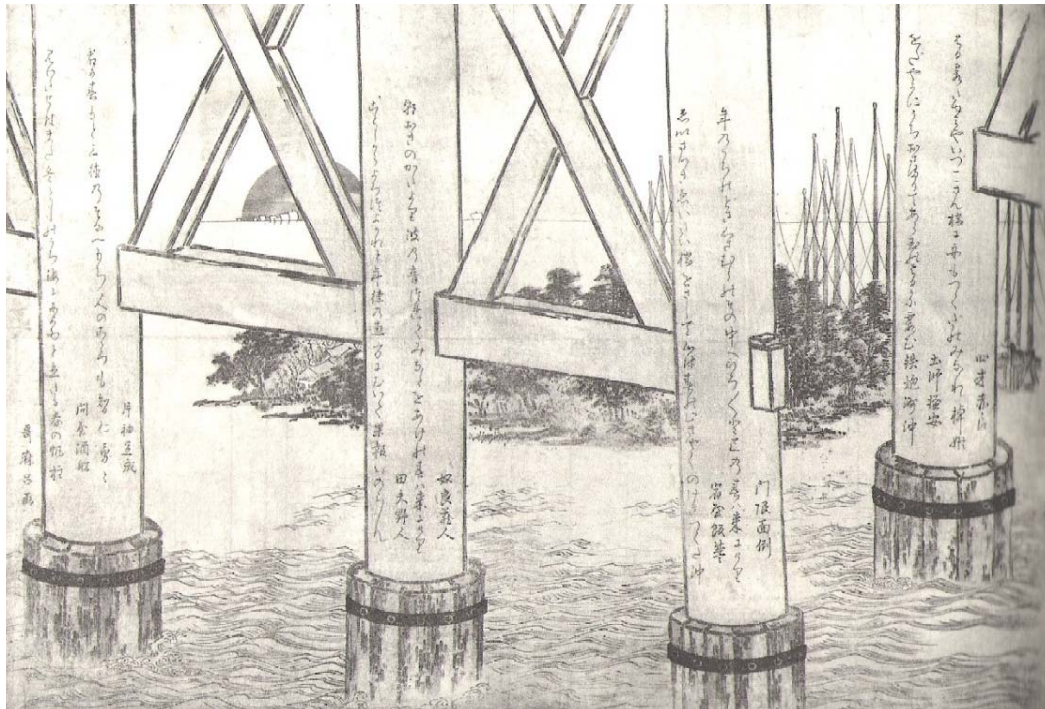


Figure 29: “The Eternal Generations Bridge.” An *ōbōshozenshiban* surimono for the New Year of 1785, with poetry by Yomo no Akara, Haji no Kakiyasu, Mongen no Mendō, Yadoya no Meshimori, Nura no Yoshihito and Denbu no Yajin, and illustration by Kitagawa Utamaro.

<i>Eissasa</i>	Heigh-ho!
<i>Eitaibashi wo</i>	To Eternal Generation Bridge
<i>Sashite yuku</i>	We go--
<i>Haru no hikyaku no</i>	Bearer of spring light arrive
<i>Kesa Tsukuda oki</i>	This morning at the Tsukuda offing ⁶¹⁰
--Yadoya no Meshimori ["Serving Boy at the Inn"]	

Although two of the eight poems on the print do remarkably mention the zodiac animal of the year, the snake—often associated with the seaside due to its connection with the Goddess Benten, whose major shrines are located by the ocean—the work as a whole does not have the overt concentration on the year, month markings or era name as its basis that one typically finds in *egoyomi*. Nor do we usually find a focus on zodiac signs or year configurations on early, large format surimono, with the exception of those that explicitly take calendar format. Additionally, whereas miniature calendar prints typically contain one or two verses, the grand *kaishi* presented from a half to two dozen poems, making for very different sorts of text-image relationships. Contrasting these works suggests that *kyōka* developed along a dual path in early prints, without a great deal of crossover, individual poets adding verses to designs for calendars (sometimes their own designs as well), and groups of poets creating large, *kaishi*-style surimono, without calendar signs or symbols, as representations of their events. *Kyōka* thus functioned in conjunction with two distinct genres in these early works, without much interaction or overlap between them.⁶¹¹

The distinction between large *kyōka* surimono, which developed ultimately from *kaishi* presentation sheets, through *haikai* surimono and announcements, and the

⁶¹⁰ えいさっさえいたい橋をさしてゆく春のひきやくのけさつくだ沖。Much of the play in this poem is with the sound. The fourth line has a bridge with *haru no hi* ("spring day"/"spring light") and *hikyaku* ("bearer") and the final line has the familiar bridge with Tsukuda ("arrive"). The light of New Year's Day is personified as a messenger, bringing renewed (eternal) life.

⁶¹¹ This key distinction is blurred by the anachronistic application of the term "surimono" to calendar prints. Moreover, whenever critics have assumed that surimono as a genre (not just nineteenth century *kyōka* surimono as one type within it) developed from calendar prints, they have been unable to explain large format surimono, resorting to wild, unsupported conjectures to try to make sense of them. For examples, see Forrer (1979) and Kobayashi (in Carpenter, ed., 2005).

small prints with *kyōka* that grew out of *egoyomi* was therefore much more than size. But from size itself, a number of consequences adhered. The long panels of the *kaishi*-style surimono demanded either multiple poems or large/lengthy texts on one side, extensive panoramic illustrations on the other, leading not only to a looser, albeit for that fact sometimes grander type of text-image integration, but even the development of a new pictorial genre for *ukiyo-e*, the landscape print.⁶¹² By contrast, the miniature calendar print demanded close focus on a concentrated, often simple subject, as well as offering only a minimal space for text in early works—though sizes were to expand in the 1790s, and the potential for text increase. Nevertheless, smaller sizes enforced tighter text-image relationships, in the number of poems to an image as well as in the formal integration of text and image not typically found in the *kaishi* format (the 1785 Utamaro work being one exception). To size too, methods of distribution and reception attached: the *kaishi* surimono, as we have seen in the illustration to Santō Kyōden's *Edo umare uwaki no kabayaki*, among other sources, were often sent by messengers, and folded into envelopes.⁶¹³ The unfolding of such a surimono was a step-by-step process, which designers could manipulate to create changing impressions and delayed revelations of the full content. The calendar print, by contrast, was immediately perceived in full, and of a size suitable for passing from hand to hand, tending towards person-to-person exchanges. Here, delaying full perception of the content required the employment of layered meanings and riddle-like effects, so that although the print entered the eye with immediacy, it had to bounce

⁶¹² As a commercial genre, landscape prints did not truly come into their own until the late 1820s, though there were commercial productions in miniature form, inspired by or even taken directly from surimono (as in Hokusai's 1802 Tokaido set with *kyōka*) from the turn of the nineteenth century. There were, however, landscape prints in book form from an earlier date, as well as so-called "perspective prints" (*uki-e*), used for street show viewing with special lenses. Surimono, in fact, bear a closer relationship to book prints in its compositional influences than to *ukiyo-e*.

⁶¹³ The envelopes for some *kaishi* surimono, such as the Shunman illustrated *Hyakunin isshu* introduced below, have actually survived with these works.

around the brain and be examined several times before its full significance was apprehended. Thus format itself—in contradiction to those who simply posit that early *kyōka* surimono took multiple forms, as though all *kyōka* surimono were of one nature, merely manifested in different paper sizes⁶¹⁴—can be seen as determining distinct types of *kyōka* works, with different characteristics, layouts and uses.

To elaborate some further distinctions, we can look at the historical utilizations of each format. A survey of surviving pieces in each genre suggests, as one might expect from their size, that miniature pieces were several times more plentiful than *kaishi*-size *kyōka* surimono. When we consider that some eight or more *koban* calendars could be made of a single one of its sheets, the reason for this ratio would seem plain—cost. But in fact, if we consider that miniature calendar prints were paid for individually, and the *kaishi* by a group, the costs per person in utilizing each format were not significantly different. The *kaishi* surimono, however, required much more coordination and editing, as well as group events or expressions from which it could be made or for which it would be suitable. In contrast, the miniature print functioned more as an individually designed, self-reflecting presentation in humbler, more relaxed format, which could thus include much more personal content. Each format, moreover, brought with it its traditions of usage, important because they structured the expectations of recipients and so enforced certain practices, such as the continued usage of calendar marks on small *kyōka* surimono into the nineteenth century—even after these had developed independence from *egoyomi* and no longer relied on month notation for importance—or the broad themes of the *kaishi* surimono. Obviously too, calendar prints with *kyōka* were made for one particular season, the New Year, whereas *kaishi* surimono, coming from the practices of *haikai* and announcement, were made at all times of year, for seasonal events and personal

⁶¹⁴ Asano (1997) states this most explicitly.

occasions made public—name changes, changes of address, memorials for the deceased, and so on. We can then characterize the *kaishi* format as a much more public type of work, even if privately printed and distributed. As the Nanpo quotes suggest, these were typically also made in larger numbers than miniature surimono, and reflected the movements of a group, or individuals as members of a group, rather than as isolated beings. *Egoyomi*, by contrast, with or without *kyōka*, were much closer to New Year greeting cards, sent from person to person, and reflecting private events and an individual relationship to the content of the works.

Some of these distinctions can be seen in a comparison of works from the 1790s. Kubo Shunman 窪俊満 (1757-1820), who I will focus on for my first set of examples here, was an *ukiyo-e* painter and *kyōka* poet, who led the Hakuraku Group (伯楽側) from 1796, and later created his own studio for the creation of surimono, making him one of the most important figures in this form.⁶¹⁵ His illustration for a miniature picture calendar of 1791 (Figure 30), with verse by Fuwa Sekibito, depicts a parading courtesan with her child attendants, the numbers for the large months of the year on the courtesan's kimono pattern of peacock feathers, small on the child's matching kimono. Fuwa's poem reads:

<i>Wakakusa no</i>	To feel young as the spring grass
<i>Motsu ki sanada wo</i>	She attaches fine silk to the cords
<i>O ni tsukete</i>	Of her spring horse sandals--
<i>Kokoro hikaruru</i>	But with every step she takes
<i>Haru no komageta</i>	It's <i>my</i> heart on which she tugs ⁶¹⁶

⁶¹⁵ For details on Shunman, see Tanaka Tatsuya “Kubo Shunman no kenkyū” in *Ukiyo-e Geijutsu*, nos. 107-109 and John Carpenter in *The Commercial and Cultural Climate of Japanese Printmaking* (2004)

⁶¹⁶ 若草のもつきさなたを緒につけて心ひかるる春の駒下駄. The poem is complex. Sanada was a kind of thick weaving associated with Sanada Masayuki, cloth woven this way being used originally as ties for weaponry, later for men's obi. Here, the courtesan wears a richly embossed obi made of this cloth, and the poem suggests she uses it also as ties for her *komageta* (“horse sandals”) the high footwear used by women of her profession. *Koma* suggests *harukoma*, spring horses, a standard seasonal reference. The author implies that it is his heart, not the sandal straps, that she tugs on with every step, as one might lead a reined horse. The first part of the poem, however, has layers that are not entirely clear. Does *wakakusa* refer to the young *kamuro*? Is the courtesan the tree (*ki*) having (*motsu*) them? Is there a pun on *mokki*, wooden ornaments used as body decorations? Or is this a reference to the wooden (*ki*) hagoita, which holds (*motsu*) an image of young grass?



Figure 30: "Courtesan on Parade." A picture calendar for the New Year of 1791, with long months on the peacock feathers on the courtesan's kimono, small months on the matching design on her kamuro's. Illustration by Kubo Shunman and *kyōka* poem by Fuwa Sekibito.

The cross-references between image and poem bind them closely together, and it is fairly clear that the illustration was made after the poem, giving the courtesan the thick *Sanada* obi mentioned in the verse, as well as its high *geta* shoes, and her attendants *mokki*-style wooden hair ornaments, referenced by pun, and a *hagoita* with a design of spring grass (*wakakusa*). The poem, therefore, forces the recipient to look very closely at the image, and to draw out the intimate connections, even adding extra layers of pun, such as *wakakusa no motsu ki* for the wooden *hagoita* with image of spring grass, a reference that would be far too indirect and distant to make without pictorial support. *Sanada* cloth, moreover, was famed as a mixing of the *daishōgara* (large and small patterns) of silk weave, accomplished by Sanada Masayuki (1544-1608),⁶¹⁷ this *daishō* connecting with the *daishōgara* (large and small month patterns) in the kimono here. Curiously, the print was not made for a horse year, as the reference to *koma* would suggest, nor a bird year, as the peacock feathers might hint, but for the year of the boar. The reference to *Sanada*, moving from cloth to historical figure, helps to explain the zodiac connection, through the celebrated boar hunts of the pre-Tokugawa Era generals, while the character for *o* (緒 • cord) in fact closely resembles that for *inoshishi* (猪 • boar), only their radicals differing. Though such a reading is of course forced, relying on a visual overlap in the characters, we could even manipulate the middle line to suggest *i ni tsukete*, “come alongside [chase down] the boar” or even *Sanadao i ni tsukete* “tie the boar with a *Sanada* [Masayuki] cord.”⁶¹⁸ Once again, this is not an interpretation in any sense sanctioned by the conventional use of language, but suggested by the objective externals of the poem, its illustration and the zodiac year it was made for. The demands of these externals can

⁶¹⁷ *Edogo jiten* (Tōkyōdō shuppan, 1991), 359, paraphrasing the *Kindai sejidan* (first printed in 1734).

⁶¹⁸ Although I have transliterated the character for “strap/cord” in its modern reading as *o*, the original sound was *wo*, allowing the first, direct object marker to transform into “cord” if we force “boar” onto the character.

lead us to make tenuous associations from the poem that would not normally happen at the level of language alone.

Another Shunman illustrated *kyōka* work (Figure 31) is in *kaishi* format, and dates to c.1796-97. This print was made to commemorate two moon-viewing poetry meetings, on 8/15 and 9/13, making it an autumn work, and returns us to the vicinity of the Eitaibashi Bridge, seen in Utamaro's 1785 work and a popular locale for *kyōka* gatherings. Here Shunman presents us with a broad view of the Sumida River, with Tsukuda to the far right, from the vantage point of an elegant restaurant on the edge of its banks. Notably, however, as in Shunshō's large "Ise" announcement surimono, this panorama would only open slowly to the viewer as the print was unfolded. The first sight, on opening the text panels, would be of the boats by the bridge, with just a hint of the silver moon at the edge. As the last fold was opened, the viewer would see the far riverbank, then the edge of the roof and finally the inhabited restaurant, making for a gradual unraveling of the content, with subtle changes in expectation along the way. For this reason, there was no need, as in the 1791 Shunman illustrated calendar, to create layers of meaning and association to add complexity to the content. Thus the poems relate to the illustration here as the scene of their production, rather than as an imaginary vision of their particular literary content or approach. The moon, local place names and season do all figure in the poems, but in relation to the context of the *kyōka* gathering, not that of the image per se. Here is a typical example of the 21 *kyōka* appended, which include one by Shunman himself:

<i>Hazuki yori</i>	From the eighth month
<i>Masaki no kazura</i>	The vines of the spindle tree
<i>Nagaki yo no</i>	A long night's bridge
<i>Hashi nimo amaru</i>	And over it the remains
<i>Nagazuki no tsuki</i>	of a long month's moon
--Tōhachitei Umenoto ⁶¹⁹	

⁶¹⁹ 葉月よりまさきのかつら永き代の橋にもあまる長月の月。



Figure 31: An *ōbōshozenshiban* surimono to commemorate moon-viewing poetry parties, autumn c.1796-97. Illustration by Kubo Shunman and *kyōka* poetry by himself and his poetry circle (including Fuwa Sekibito).

It is enlightening, moreover, to compare Shunman's "Moon" surimono to another in the split *kaishi* format he illustrated in the mid-1790s with an image of *Hyakunin isschu* poetry cards (Figure 32). One glance at this image for the New Year of 1795 suggests its "*kyōka*" nature, summoning up the classical poets of celebrated *tanka*, the very basis for *kyōka* composition. Turning the print to the text side, however, we discover something shocking: this is not a *kyōka* print at all, nor even an elegant invitation modeled in the *kyōka* spirit, but a *haikai* surimono in the traditional style, with *saitan* and *seibo* sections of the type going all the way back to the 1702 *Ransetsu Saitan*. Unlike most early *haikai* surimono, however, the image here makes a direct appeal to the veneration of the classics, and, much in *kyōka* style, overwrites them with its own contemporary interests, the cards appearing on the print all bearing *hokku*. Since the emphasis of this dissertation has been on describing the physical form of surimono as the material embodiment of its poetry's aesthetics, we might be tempted to believe that the aesthetics of *haikai* had at this time somehow merged with *kyōka*, but this is not so, as the direct use of language in the print's poetry reveals:

<i>Haru koma ya</i> <i>Temari moraishi</i> <i>Musume no ko</i>	Spring ponies-- My daughter receives A ball for badminton ⁶²⁰
<i>Ogamu hito wa</i> <i>Ogamu asahi ya</i> <i>Ōmisoka</i>	Those who pray Pray to the morning light-- The last night of the year ⁶²¹
<i>Yoki kinu wo</i> <i>Kinu akindo ni</i> <i>Toshi no ichi</i>	For merchants, who Don't wear fine cloth The New Year's market ⁶²²

⁶²⁰ はる駒や手毬もらひし娘の子。

⁶²¹ をかむ人はをかむ朝日や大三十日。

⁶²² よき絹を着ぬあき人にとしの市。The *senryū*-like irony in this verse notes that merchants, who have quantities of fine cloth to sell, don't wear it themselves. The verse plays with *kinu* (don't wear) and *kinu* (cloth), as well as *akindo* (merchants) and *aki-bito* (a person who has grown tired of or given up on something.) The use of *kana* vs. *kanji* in transcription often points out intended wordplays, such as あき人 (rather than 商人) here.



Figure 32: An *ōbōshozenshiban* surimono for the New Year of 1795, with *haikai* verses by twenty-one poets and illustration by Kubo Shunman.

Since the textual bases of these works are so different, why is it then that we are unable to distinguish *kyōka*, *haikai* and announcement surimono by their illustrations, layout and text-image relations in the 1790s?

As I have argued from early in my analysis of the development of surimono (Chapter Three), the embodiment of poetic aesthetics in the form of surimono was not always an immediate process, but rather involved working through a variety of approaches until the correct alignment, which melded form and content, was found. Particularly after the practice of commissioning illustrations from artists outside of poetic circles became standard after 1765, surimono was opened to a second set of aesthetics, primarily those of *ukiyo-e* artists. The pleasure and luxury loving aspects of *ukiyo-e* illustration made it eminently suitable to invitation pieces, and also, with its fully developed methods for defining the present through the structures of the past, as seen in the *yatushi-e* of Okumura Masanobu, Suzuki Harunobu and others, to *kyōka* as well. In fact, reversing the social and poetic centered history given so far, we might even argue that the practice of commissioning *ukiyo-e* artists as illustrators summoned particular kinds of content, namely surimono for fancy events and with a kind of poetry (*kyōka*) that, like *ukiyo-e*, delighted in utilizing classical models as the basis for understanding contemporary experience. *Haikai* surimono, by contrast, seems to have been swept up in the wave of popular style for its illustration. Although *haikai* could also summon classical models in its allusions and intertextually relied on past usage of words for meaning, its approach to language itself was far more straightforward than in *kyōka*, as the above examples suggest. Language might be used decoratively in *haikai*, in trills of repeated sounds, but did not generally (at least in its Bashō-oriented version) shift and double in the same manner as *kyōka*; its sense of reality was far more concrete. As such, *haikai* tended to summon equally concrete images, typically the things of the everyday world that formed the basis of its poetic inspiration. The

Hyakunin isshu as literature was the kind of stimulus that produced *kyōka*, not *haikai*, though we might imagine a *hokku* on the subject of children playing its corresponding card game in a contemporary setting. But what Shunman gives us is not such an image, but rather the celebrated structure itself—exemplified by the drawing of the classical woman on a veranda overlooking Kyōto hills—filled with a modern form of reality—*hokku* rather than *tanka* on the cards, the year date and Shunman’s name on the opening page. In short, Shunman, primarily a *kyōka* poet, has given these *hokku* a *kyōka*-style interpretation in his illustration. Certainly the classic image is beautiful and the conceit playful and intriguing, but judged as an integration of poetic aesthetics in a material format, the work is found to be off-key.

Shunman’s *kyōka*-style illustration for a *haikai* surimono is not an anomaly or single exception to the type of illustration found on these works either. In fact, as noted, *kyōka*, *haikai* and announcement surimono in the *kaishi* format overlap so closely it is virtually impossible to tell from illustration alone exactly what the textual content may be. Although the *ukiyo-e* aesthetics of idealization worked well in conjunction with *kyōka* and announcements, *haikai* illustration in this manner fell out of touch with its particular aesthetics in Edo, so that it is not surprising to find fewer *haikai* surimono here in this format as the nineteenth century progresses. This is not to say that *haikai* surimono ever completely disappeared in Edo, but notably, when the form made a comeback later in the nineteenth century, it was in connection with *bunjin* style artistic aesthetics, influenced by the Shijō surimono of the Kamigata region, and not with *ukiyo-e*. Moreover, comparing the two tracks on which *kyōka* surimono developed towards the nineteenth century, we can posit that, although both were suited in various ways to the nature *kyōka*, it was the smaller format, based on *egoyomi*, that offered the most possibilities for an alignment of form and content. The large *kaishi* had a grandeur and historical resonance similar to *kyōka*’s—which often

based its compositions on an exalted model from the past—with panoramic illustrations and an impressive size, in a format with a deep history in poetic tradition. Its gradual revelation of content, through the stages of unfolding, matched that of “opening” all the double significations of a *kyōka* and realizing its full meaning, as well as the method *kyōka* often employed of appearing as a quiet, classical poem until the shock of the final line. But the sheer size demanded more verses than could meaningfully relate to an illustration, not allowing for the development of a text-image interaction of the complexity with which its verses were constructed. The small, *egoyomi* format, by contrast, lacked the majesty and history of *kaishi*, but excelled in its “internal folds” of signification, with webs of interrelations between text, image and occasion (New Year) that matched the intricacy of *kyōka*’s own processes of composition. The unique form of surimono that develops in the early nineteenth century, the *shikishi*-based *kakuban* surimono, emerges as a compromise that combines the best elements of both previous formats. But before this satisfying solution was hit upon, creating a new standard for surimono that dominated it thereafter, the genre underwent a number of other experiments and compromise positions in the 1790s and early 1800s, necessary for its discovery, and so demanding our attention.

I would like to look at the 1790s and early 1800s by introducing another leading surimono illustrator, Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 (1760-1849), as a source for examples.⁶²³ Hokusai surpassed even Shunman as the most prolific artist involved with surimono; according to one count, at least 860 surimono with his signature survive.⁶²⁴ These include surimono in all its variations, large, medium and small, with

⁶²³ Unlike Shunman, there is no shortage of information on Hokusai. The question is rather where to begin in the library of books that have been written on him. I have relied on

⁶²⁴ Kubota Katsuhiro has made the count, as described in Asano, “Surimono ‘Genroku kasen kai awase’ to ‘Uma-tsukushi’ wo megutte,” 33. Kubota’s count of course includes works considered peripheral to



Figure 33: “A Cat’s Child is a Kitten...[*neko no ko no koneko...*]” A picture calendar for the New Year of 1792, with the pattern for the long and short months represented by the size of the “rat” characters in the inscription and additional calendar information on the screen in the rear. Illustration by Katsushika Hokusai.

making this a more extensive calendar than most *egoyomi*. Although clearly focused on calendar function, its presentation through text adds another level of enjoyment and wit to the work.

Shunman and Hokusai's illustrations for *egoyomi* are both in a miniature format, 9.5 by 13.7 cm. (approximately 3.8 by 6.5 inches) for the Hokusai, but as the 1790s proceed, the sizes for calendar prints begin to expand, precisely to accommodate the increasing use of poetry. This increase in size, therefore, goes hand-in-hand with the transition from *egoyomi* with *kyōka* to an independent *kyōka* surimono. The Hokusai-illustrated 1798 *egoyomi* parody of the six immortal poets (六歌仙・*rokkasen*), for example (Figure 34), is almost twice the size of the 1792 "Rat Year," in keeping with the half dozen *kyōka* (one for each 'immortal poet') it contains. Here, however, unlike the 1792 work, the calendar information is hardly significant in the design or concept at all, relegated as almost an afterthought to a fan that one of the women holds. Instead, all of the attention goes to the portraits of the women, which humorously borrow from standard depictions of the immortal poets, and the verses related them, each of which identifies a woman of a different age and status, as well as a poet. For the young *kamuro* (courtesan attendant) looking out directly at the viewer and representing Sōjō Henjō, this verse has been inscribed:

*Ne no hi suru
Matsu no daifu ni
Yobarete wa
Kamuro mo chiyo no
Henji wo ya hiku*

If, on the Day of the Rat
"Pine Mistress" she is called
The courtesan's girl gives a reply
For the ages, pulling out
A hesitant "ye-es?"⁶²⁶

⁶²⁶ 子の日する松の太夫によはれては禿も千代の返事をやひく。 On the First Rat Day, it was customary to pull pine shoots from the fields, replanting these symbols of eternity near one's home for good fortune. A Pine Mistress (*Matsu no daifu*) was the highest rank of courtesan. The *kamuro* who serves her is called by her rank, but unaccustomed to such treatment, has trouble "pulling out" her answer. Her hesitant reply is so precious that it becomes a "reply for the ages" (*chiyo no henji*).



Figure 34: “Six Immortal Poets [rokkasen].” A picture calendar for the New Year of 1798, long and short months inscribed on the open fan. With six *kyōka* poems (one for each figure) by different poets, and illustration by Katsushika Hokusai.

The humor of this verse is reflected in the image itself, which borrows from some of the techniques of comic portraiture in Kitao Masanobu's *Azuma-buri kyōka bunkō*, such as the open book on the head to represent court headgear, as well as from the celebrated portraits of female types in the contemporary ukiyo-e *bijin* prints of Utamaro, particularly the “merchant’s wife” (*shōnin no tsuma*) on the lower right. This combination of the immortal poets motif with archetypal women, moreover, has the *kyōka* quality of mixing the immanent and the classical in the same motif. The effects of this work, therefore, lie in the poetry and its inspiration for the image, with the added calendar information no more than spice to add an element of flavor to the work, or even a vestige of the *egoyomi* origin of this form, which is now for all intents and purposes *kyōka* surimono, not merely calendar print with *kyōka*.

As evidence of this transition, there are numerous Hokusai-illustrated works from c.1797-98 on that appear exactly like *egoyomi* in size, subject, style and gentle coloring, but lack calendar information, bearing only *kyōka*.⁶²⁷ This *kyōka* surimono for the sheep year 1799 (Figure 35), for example, depicts Daikoku, one of the Gods of Good Fortune, in the pleasure quarters—a common theme in *ukiyo-e yatsushi-e*. It bears two *kyōka*, but no calendar marks. According to the custom of the quarter, Daikoku is distributing *kamibana* (“paper flowers”) in lieu of direct payment for services received. These pieces of paper stood as promissory notes, and would later be turned into cash. As paper (*kami*) is homophonous with god, these “divine flowers” from Daikoku are comically being received with great joy and display of gratitude by the owners of the house, a reversal of the usual distaste of merchants for credit. Moreover, as the sheep year in Japan was associated with goats (sheep not being an indigenous animal), the conceit here is of “paper flowers” being eaten up by

⁶²⁷ See Wright Collection, nos.151-153, 156 for 1798 works; Calza's Hokusai II.10 and 1993 Hokusai Exhibition, 160 no. 4 for c.1797 works.



Figure 35: A *kokonotsugiri-ban* surimono for the New Year of 1799, with *kyōka* verse by Senshuan Sennen Matsunari and illustration by Katsushika Hokusai.

the owner, whose bowed posture and raised hands (like ears) make him appear goat-like. The first poem plays up this situation:

<i>Fukugami wa</i>	The God of Fortune
<i>Sukase tamaeru</i>	Pleases by coaxing
<i>Kamibana wo</i>	Distributing paper flowers
<i>Wakete hitsuji no</i>	Pulled up for this
<i>Haru ya makuran</i>	Spring of the Sheep ⁶²⁸

Just as there was no actual need for calendar information in the “Six Poets,” this print dispenses with it entirely, relying only on the poetry, illustration and the conceit they combine to present. Once again, as I have described in the early development of surimono with programs, board games and calendars, a model with relatively circumscribed applications—though nonetheless, in the case of *egoyomi*, fully and imaginatively explored within its borders—based on a particular social function of a work on paper, gave way to the structuring combination of text and illustration, with their virtually unlimited range and possibilities. The emergence of independent *kyōka* surimono from picture calendars can thus be described as a transfer of the focus of wit from disguised month notation to illustration, poetry and their interactions. Although there is no neat dividing line between the forms—*egoyomi* and *kyōka* surimono standing as poles within an essentially united genre, with works in this miniature format from 1785 on falling closer to either end—the late 1790s marks the emergence of a formally purer type of *kyōka* surimono, with no reliance on calendar symbols, even as a vestige. Pure *egoyomi* and mixed works continue to be made even after the rise of the *kyōka*-only work in this format, but such a concentrated focus on poetry and its illustration opens the door for movement away from *egoyomi* format itself, allowing the kinds of *kyōka*-image relations that had developed within it to be applied

⁶²⁸ 福神はすかせためへるかみはなをすけてひつしの春やまくらん. *Fukugami*, “God of Fortune”, can also mean ‘wiping paper’. See an 1811 surimono with similar theme and composition by Hokusai’s pupil Hokkei in Keyes (1984), 44-45.

to other layouts and types. In fact, the increasing size of *egoyomi* with *kyōka* in the 1790s already hints at this development.

The 1790s and early 1800s, indeed, can be seen as a time of experimentation, of trial and error in *kyōka* surimono production. In contrast to *haikai*-based works in Edo, which retained the *kaishi* format, *kyōka* pieces took such a broad range of forms that it is tempting to lump them all together as “*kyōka* surimono” as many have done, and not attempt to make sense of their differences. But as revealed in my discussion of the far ends of surimono formats—*kaishi* on the one extreme, miniature *egoyomi* on the other—and of the poles of focus within the latter extreme, the only way to properly understand surimono’s development is to appreciate the unique characteristics and background baggage of each type. Moreover, what we will see in the other formats implemented are variations on each of these basic types, which may introduce new models, but always relate to one of the extremes of format in the characteristics employed. The *nagaban* surimono, for example, consisted of just one panel of the standard split-format *kaishi*, making a long, horizontal work.⁶²⁹ Like the split-format *kaishi*, the *nagaban* subdivided poetry and image, here relegating them to left and right halves of the sheet, rather than top and bottom across the fold, making for a slightly more integrated, though still quite separate, formal arrangement, with division on a single plane. Because it related primarily to *kaishi*, not *egoyomi*, *nagaban* did not include calendar information, and tended to use multiple poems in relation to a single image, with somewhat closer text-image relations than the *kaishi*, but not nearly so close as *egoyomi* with poetry. In this c.1798 *nagaban*, for example, Hokusai depicts a pair of women and a child taking in a beautiful landscape with blossoming cherries from a veranda (Figure 36). The image trails off into mist near the center, where the

⁶²⁹ It is important here to distinguish panels cut from *kaishi* surimono (typically all illustration), which are sometimes called “*nagaban*”, from a true *nagaban* format.

first woman's hand is pointing, and seventeen *kyōka* poems begin. These deal with the pictorial subjects of the print, cherry blossoms, mountains, mists and the images of high spring. In text-image relations, content, size and layout, therefore, this work is related to the full sheet surimono.

Although *nagaban* of this kind clearly derived from the split-format *kaishi*, consisting of exactly one of its panels, just as it would be seen when folded, this derivation does not imply that its variation of format was of no influence on smaller surimono. Indeed, by bringing poetry and image together on a single plane, the *nagaban* in some respects came closer to the miniature surimono, and offered it a formal means of arranging image and verses. Thus this late 1790s *kyōka* surimono, with a Hokusai illustration of children enjoying a “peep show” that gave them a ‘3-D’ vision of an imaginary foreign city, drawn with strict, Renaissance-style perspective (Figure 37), retains some sense of the long proportions and layout of the *nagaban*, but in fact reduces the length in half.⁶³⁰ This layout style, with image on the right and text on the left, gradually became standard too in even smaller works of horizontal orientation, such as the commonly encountered *kokonotsugiriban*,⁶³¹ which lacked the breadth of the *nagaban*, and had room for only a pair or so of verses. This formal movement from the grand *kaishi* to the half-sheet *nagaban*, and then down to small sizes suggests that the final form of the nineteenth century *kyōka* surimono was not simply a building up of *egoyomi* into poetry prints, but also a scaling down of *kaishi*-format surimono to a single-planed form, without folds, on which poetry and images were integrated.

⁶³⁰ The size for this work is 12.4 x 24.6 cm., as opposed to the 14 x 57.7 cm. *nagaban* in the previous figure.

⁶³¹ “A ninth cut”, the most popular size for surimono in the late 1790s and early 1800s, consisting of a ninth of the full *ōbōshozenshi*, approximately 14 x 18.5 cm. See Appendix II.



Figure 36: A *nagaban kyōka* surimono, c. 1798, with *kyōka* verses by seventeen poets and illustration by Katsushika Hokusai.



Figure 37: An unusual format (extended *yoko-chūban*) *kyōka* surimono, c. late 1790s, with *kyōka* verses by eleven poets and illustration by Katsushika Hokusai.

This later 1808 surimono by Hokusai's pupil Sōri (Figure 38), to leap ahead to the effects of this text-image integration, depicts the legendary sea castle of the Dragon King and eleven figures who have waded through to celebrate the New Year there, with poetry relegated to the far left. The verses, however, are still physically close and limited enough in number to playfully intersect with the illustration:

<i>Kesa haru wa</i>	This morning, spring began
<i>Tatsu no miyako no</i>	And in the ancient Dragon capital
<i>Nenrei ni</i>	It seems everyone is
<i>Ohire to miete</i>	Hiding their age in fins and tails
<i>Kasumu ya unabara</i>	The misty fields of sea ⁶³²

For vertically oriented surimono, somewhat less often encountered, the layout was quite different, initially relying on a *kaishi*-like division of text and image to top and bottom, though without any fold or strict separation. Ultimately, however, towards the turn of the century, as *kyōka* surimono grew distinct from *egoyomi*, both Shunman and Hokusai began to experiment with a taller, narrower format, which borrowed its proportions from a different model entirely, the *tanzaku* poetry card. These pieces typically employed a standing figure, often a woman in the guise of a historical or legendary personage, and were produced in sets, such as Hokusai's Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove (七賢・*Shichiken*), Seven Komachi (七小町・*Nanakomachi*), or Heroes of the Water Margin (水滸伝・*Suikoden*), or Shunman's set of the latter, as well as his Five Chivalrous Men (男伊達・*Otokodate*) or Seven Spear Bearers of Yanagase.⁶³³ Works of this kind have conventionally been called *jūnikiriban*, as the *kaishi* paper was cut into twelve parts to make them, but in dimensions, roughly 8 x 21 cm., their extreme verticality resembles that of the

⁶³² 今朝はるはたつの都の年齢に尾鰭とみえてかすむや海原. The poem bridges on *haru wa tatsu* ("spring begins") and *tatsu no miyako* ("capital of the dragon"). *Ohire* means literally "tails and fins" but also figuratively "lie"/"exaggerate". The figures have all put on fish headgear, thus disguising their ages.

⁶³³ Utamaro also has a tall, vertical picture calendar from 1796 (Chiba no.17)



Figure 38: “At the Dragon King’s Castle [ryūgajō].” A *kokonotsugiriban* surimono in celebration of the New Year of 1808, with three *kyōka* verses and illustration by Sōri.

tanzaku card, almost matching its breadth but not its full length (typically 35 cm.) Nevertheless, like the reduced *nagaban* seen above, these “short *tanzaku*” took aspects of layout from the standard poetry card of this format, often employed for the inscription of *hokku* with illustration (*haiga*), thereby developing a closer integration of text and image. In this Shunman work from a set of the five chivalrous commoners (侠客五番の内・*Kyōkaku goban no uchi*) poetry merges formally with illustration, flowing around it and fusing with it, rather than divided to an opposite panel or section of the print (Figure 39). The thematic integration matches the physical, as in this poem for the image of a thief:

<i>Jōmae no</i>	The way of picking the lock
<i>Akekata chikaku</i>	Is near at hand
<i>Uguisu no</i>	Come and apply
<i>Kagi tsukete kuru</i>	The warbler key
<i>Ume niou yado</i>	At the fragrant plum mansion ⁶³⁴

Moreover, when two of these tall *jūnigiriban* are placed side by side, as sets utilizing this format lead us to do,⁶³⁵ the result is a shape familiar to anyone who has seen nineteenth century surimono, the square *kakuban* format, resembling the classical *shikishi* poetry sheet.

The development of the *kakuban* surimono is conventionally discussed in relation to the mid-Bunka (1804-1817) and Bunsei Eras (1818-1829), and indeed, this is the time when this format flourished as standard, dominating surimono production until the late 1830s. 1808 has been given as the year of the first precisely datable *kakuban* surimono, and treated as a watershed for surimono production.⁶³⁶ But in fact,

⁶³⁴ 錠前のあけかたちかく鶯の鍵つけてくる梅匂う宿。 *Akeru* (“open”) is a spring/New Year term, here applied literally to a lock. Warbler and plum appear at the gates of houses (*yado*) in *waka*.

⁶³⁵ Although sets of individual prints, these *jūnigiriban* were designed to be put side by side and seen together, with the line of vision of a figure in one print going towards the figure in its neighbor. See, for example, Shunman’s “Yanagase Spear Bearers” in *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, nos. 157-163.

⁶³⁶ Keyes (1984), 15, who notes that one *kakuban* in the Spencer group does seem to predate this. Asano (1997) 7 emphasizes the production of *kakuban* surimono series from 1808, positing the series



Figure 39: From the series *The Five Chivalrous Commoners* (侠客五番の内). A *jūnigiriban* surimono for a New Year, c.1800, with two *kyōka* verses and illustration by Kubo Shunman.

“Monogatari Awase” illustrated by Kitao Shigemasa and Hotei Gosei as the first of this kind (Chiba no.99, *Jewels* no.21, Kruml 1989 no. 13).

square surimono were made much earlier than 1808. Two square surimono in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, one with a year notation, the other with calendar information, are dated 1803, while of the three earliest square pieces in the Katsushika Hokusai Museum of Art, one is a calendar for 1796, the other two c.1797 by signature. Nor are these simply square, but come quite close in dimensions to what would eventually be the standard *kakuban*, at about 18 x 21 cm.⁶³⁷ Yet what is significant about these early works is not merely their precedence for the later domination of the *kakuban*—revealing that the rise of this format to prominence was not so immediate as it is usually taken to be, but rather a gradual breakthrough and slow realization of its possibilities—but more, the relation of these pieces to the vertical surimono made at approximately the same time, for these show a similar kind of formal text-image integration, with poems fit neatly around illustrations, typically above them, framing an image space. Shunman's illustration for an 1803 New Year surimono, for example (Figure 40) takes as its theme *setsubun*, the “parting of the seasons,” for which home exorcisms were performed with red beans and a traditional chant. The text flows across the top of the print in vertical lines, leaving room for the man with upraised fist, but pressing down suddenly on the young woman, who watches him with shock at his vitality, apparently afraid that he is about to throw the beans at her. The placement of the text, in short, captures some of the mood and reinforces the psychology of the situation, the man with freedom of movement (space) the woman oppressed (text bearing down). The meaning of the text itself returns this to the spirit of play, however, the very simplicity of its relation to the image providing a release of tension:

⁶³⁷ Ukiyo-e Masterpieces in European Collections, no.167 (Shunman-illustrated, 17.2 x 16.8 cm) and no.271 (Toyokuni-illustrated, 18.5 x 16.2 cm.) 1993 Hokusai exhibition no.2 (18.9 x 18 cm), no. 4 (21.5 x 23 cm) and no.12 (22 x 18.8 cm.) Sidney Ward has also introduced an early, square egoyomi (without poetry) measuring 6 3/4 x 6 7/8 inches (approximately 17 x 17.2 cm) in his privately published One Hundred Surimono in the Collection of Sidney Ward (1976).



Figure 40: “The Parting of the Seasons [*setsubun*].” A *shikishi* surimono for the New Year of 1803, with *kyōka* verse by Atsumaru and illustration by Kubo Shunman.

<i>Oi no mi no</i>	This old man, too
<i>Mame womo iwau</i>	Celebrates with beans
<i>Toshi no kazu</i>	Taking the number
<i>Tsukame wa te nimo</i>	Of his years in hand
<i>Haru no setsubun</i>	The spring parting of seasons ⁶³⁸

Whether its rise to prominence was a sudden discovery or gradual realization, the emergence of the *kakuban* format was a breakthrough of major proportions, representing nothing less than *kyōka* surimono's independence from the forms through which it had developed, its achievement of individuality and maturity. The vertical *jūnigiriban* represented a movement in a similar direction, away from the dimensions of *egoyomi* to assert *kyōka* surimono as an independent form, utilizing a classical poetic presentation model moreover as its basis. But the *shikishi*-based *kakuban* was better suited to *kyōka* surimono in many ways. As described, the *kakuban* combined the best aspects of *kaishi* and *egoyomi* formats in a medium-sized “compromise” construction that was both personable and suitable for group productions, with poetry and illustration integrated thematically and formally but not overly limited by format. Images did not have to strain to fill long, horizontal panels, or be cramped by tight dimensions, and texts no longer had to be major productions, with a dozen or more poems, but rather, with three or four verses possible, could relate to images, as well as sender and receiver, more closely. The *kakuban* was roomy, but also a size that could be exchanged in person, a single-planed form that, from *egoyomi*, had developed an internal complexity, rather than a formal one, for the gradual discovery of content, paralleling the nature of *kyōka* verse in its penchant for literary references and semantic doubling as its method of signification. Yet this smaller size did mean sacrificing the historical resonance and grandeur of the *kaishi* format, instead substituting another classical format, the *shikishi*. *Shikishi*, in fact, were in the Tokugawa Period associated even more closely with the court culture that formed the

⁶³⁸ 老の身のまめをも祝うとしの数つかめは手にもはるの節分.

basis for *kyōka* than *kaishi*, being the chosen format for the courtly Tosa painters, and frequently painted in sets with classical literary subjects, such as the Tales of Ise or Genji, as well as *waka* poems. Additionally, *shikishi* had a decorative function, made to be colorful and pleasing to the eye, which was in keeping with *ukiyo-e* style illustration. A more apt form for *kyōka* poetry could hardly be found.

With the formal fulfillment of *kyōka* surimono came an almost immediate change in the appearance of pictorial content, as well as the depth of text-image complexity. This maturity, in which the nature of poetry finds its ideal counterpart and best form of expression, is experienced as an unprecedented sophistication. Partly this was a result of the natural roominess of the square format, which in and of itself gave text and image a greater sense of relaxation and confidence, no longer crammed into tight spaces or extended beyond the capacity of the eye in order to meet the paper's horizontal demands. But it is also influenced by the new model employed, free of the conventional demands of other forms, and with an enhanced courtliness and connection to the traditions of *yamato-e*. Even in the first *kakuban* series, *Monogatari awase* ("Comparison of Tales") of 1808 (Figure 41), texts and images fill the pictorial space with new authority. Gosei's abalone shells are simple forms, yet, unlike the object on a plain ground of most *egoyomi*, have a suggestive grandeur that gives them fullness and completeness unto themselves. Their surfaces are meticulously elaborated through progressive printing techniques, including the use of powdery *gofun*, to give texture and solidity to the shells. These are objects worthy of direct contemplation, not stand-in shadows for a reality external to the image. The text-image relationship, likewise, has a kind of leisure in its very looseness and associative freedom. Although the abalone shells are used to represent the *Tosa nikki*, they do not take a prominent part in this narrative, though its first part does deal with a sea journey, undergone, moreover, at the New Year, with mentions of seafood and shells,



Figure 41: *The Tosa Diary* (土佐日記) from the series *Collected Tales* (物語合). A shikishiban surimono for a New Year c.1810. With *kyōka* verse by Jingairō Kiyosumi and illustration by Gosei.

as well as gifts from local communities. The poem, with none of the directness we have seen in the immediately previous examples, treats the giving of stringed abalone as a wish for longevity, often used to tie bridal gifts, connecting this with the female narrator (for the male author) of the Tosa Diary:

<i>Toshidama ni</i>	With a string of abalone
<i>Awabi no noshi wo</i>	Attached to
<i>Tsukeyarite</i>	Her New Year gift
<i>Onna mo sunari</i>	This woman too
<i>Haru no kadorei</i>	Makes a spring call ⁶³⁹

Already then, this 1808 work has some of the elegance and complexity that would be the hallmarks of *kakuban* surimono from this time forth, summoning up a classical source in an indirect way to lend depth and importance to the image of an object with immediate presence.

To complete the material history of surimono form, we would need to go on from this point to discuss some of the elaborations on the *kakuban* form made in the eighteen teens, twenties and thirties. These include the development of multi-sheet compositions (diptychs, triptychs, polyptychs) borrowed from *ukiyo-e*, of extensive series with dozens of works, of the unique color palette that develops from the late 1820s—with increasingly greater areas of the paper surface colored with brighter, stronger colors, quite different from the figure-on-plain-ground type that dominates early surimono—or even of the introduction of split formats with the addition of cartouches for poetry and images. But my interest here is less in giving a full account of every aspect of surimono form, as it is in analyzing this main relation between form and poetic content. I will return to some of these later aspects in the next chapter in relation to the development of a different kind of *kyōka* in the nineteenth century, but for the moment, it is best not to get bogged down in the details of the denouement, but

⁶³⁹ とし玉にあはひののしをつけやりて女もすなり春の門礼.

to let the emergence of the *kakuban* itself stand as climax, the triumph of *kyōka* poetics and its interests over the problem of material form for its production and distribution on surimono. Out of formats associated with other kinds of productions, not entirely appropriate to the nature of *kyōka*, *kyōka* surimono had developed a new kind of format, not previously used in print form, which it could occupy fully as its own. Moreover this format, as noted above, was well suited to the *kyōka* surimono's needs and to the nature of its poetry, enhancing the appearance and depth of these works. It is little surprise then that it became so quickly dominant, dwarfing the use of other formats—which never entirely disappeared, but were pushed to the periphery—for surimono with *kyōka*.

This transfer of surimono production to the *shikishi* model in Edo, in broad historical terms, represents nothing less than a shifting of the very foundation on which a century of surimono practice had rested to that point. Although nineteenth century surimono must be seen as the meeting of two tracks of private print production, the miniature *egoyomi* and the huge *kaishi*, it was always the latter that had been the true, formal medium for poetry presentation. Individuals may have inscribed poems to their little gift calendars to add interest to them, and these may have grown in size and complexity, incorporating more poets and grander ideas, but the *kaishi* sheet was still the chosen method for the presentation of a group's poetry. But *kaishi*, as I have described, were bulky in form, demanded extensive input and were not terribly personable with their size and multiple folds. Formality and historical resonance were the strong points of the form, summoning up ritual and religious presentations that went back to the days of the Heian Court. But from the very beginning of surimono, artists and commissioners had struggled to know what to do with its grand dimensions, devising various methods to keep the form from taking over the content of the work, and to arrange poetry as a meaningful unity within its

extensive structure. In the late eighteenth century, this largely meant a split format, with text and image subdivided, and the multiple folds themselves taken advantage of to create a clever, gradual revelation of content, a sequential experience of the large work. With its century of history and development, the *kaishi* surimono did not simply disappear with the emergence of the *kakuban* surimono, and in fact, surimono in this format, which remained standard for *haikai* works, were made as late as the 1930s. But the *kakuban* surimono, particularly in series, became the chosen format for *kyōka* poetry groups in Edo from the 1810s, *kaishi* productions saved for only very special occasions, particularly announcements and memorials. Not only had the poetic base of surimono shifted, but also even the structure on which surimono as a genre was founded was replaced with another, closer to the nature of that poetry. The aesthetics of its poetry had thus transformed the very ground of surimono materiality, to make it suitable to its nature.

Epilogue

My discussion of the development of the *kyōka* surimono has focused on the material forms through which this type of surimono developed, utilizing available formats and the structures they provided to give body to the poetry it contains. One can thus describe the experiments of the 1790s and early 1800s as surimono's "trying on" of different forms and constructions to find a suitable fit for its internal (poetic) nature. The hunt for the material form that best expressed *kyōka*'s aesthetic construction, its approach to world and language, moved through standard format models, such as *kaishi* and miniature *egoyomi*, making variations on them in *nagaban* and larger sized miniatures, before reaching out to new models, *tanzaku* and *shikishi*, which were nevertheless grounded in the traditional formats of poetic presentation. Although each of the formats offered different possibilities to surimono, suitable for

some aspects of *kyōka*, and none were ever completely abandoned, after the rise of the *kakuban* surimono series about 1808, other forms fairly rapidly became outmoded, and were made peripheral. The *kakuban* work, particularly in series, offered just the right amounts of inclusiveness and focus, allowing for the representation of a large group across a number of related (thematically unified) works, while letting a smaller number of poets take the spotlight on individual pieces. This format matched *kyōka* in the employment of a classical form for modern purposes, the series of *shikishi* Tosa paintings based on literary works providing an immediate model to give meaning and resonance to the form. Moreover, the *shikishi*-based *kakuban* allowed for just the right balance of decorative illustration and meaningful text-image interfaces, bringing to the form the complexity that had developed in *kyōka egoyomi*. In fact, although the development of the unique *kakuban* format for *kyōka* surimono can only be described as a meeting between the two distinct formats of private printing with *kyōka*, that meeting clearly took place closer to the *egoyomi* than to the *kaishi*, and a few *kakuban* surimono continue to use calendar markings as an enhancement, even when *kyōka* surimono had long since been established a genre independent from *egoyomi*. *Kakuban* surimono were also almost exclusively exchanged at the New Year, another aspect of their use taken from *egoyomi*.

Seeing the basis of formats in other practices, primarily poetic, and understanding the influence of these bases on the kinds of work produced constitute an important part of acknowledging the foundation of surimono in poetry, while allowing us to distinguish different paths of development for *kyōka* surimono. But the material aspects of surimono's development constitute only the superficial part of its history. Underlying these changes in format, and indeed, of the very physical qualities of surimono as a whole—colors and lines, subjects and styles, methods of printing and distribution—aspects to which I have not yet given proper attention, is a fundamental

change in the world of *kyōka* poetry. As I have suggested several times in my discussion of the nature of early *kyōka* poetry, the satirical elements of Edo *kyōka* were balanced by a less biting, lighter version of the form, which was to gain increasing importance towards the nineteenth century. This change has typically been attributed to a shift in shogunal politics from the late 1780s, resulting in the persecution of samurai involved in urban popular culture and a more rigid affirmation of social hierarchy and its expectations of classes, leading to a form of *kyōka* with less input from Nanpo and his frustrated samurai fellows, and much more of a merchant-based movement. In fact, however, as I have argued, this gentler version of *kyōka* had always been present in the form, from the aesthetics of Kisshū to those brought in by Nanpo in his influential anthology, as a means of authenticating *kyōka* historically. But simply put, if Nanpo's project can be characterized as knocking the classical ideal from its pedestal in order to replace it with the forms of contemporary reality, then nineteenth century *kyōka*, under the leadership of Shikatsube Magao, can be described as fusing the idealized classical model onto the forms of the present, in order to see them in a brighter light. This transformation, which was occurring precisely during the period I have described here, while *kyōka* surimono was finding its form, is of utmost importance for understanding the nature of surimono's material body, and why it (including the *kakuban* format) was eminently suited to the style of its poetic base.

The materially focused history of the form presented here, therefore, is only half of the story, and to understand the development of *kyōka* surimono in full, we must turn to an examination of its particular aesthetics, which grew out of, but were not the same as, those of early Edo *kyōka*. In the next chapter, I will present a study of Shikatsube Magao, the leading practitioner of *kyōka* and its surimono, in order to get at the essence of nineteenth century *kyōka*, and its relation to the material body that surimono grew into. Moreover, I will attempt to ground Magao's aesthetics and ideas

on poetry in the context of intellectual history, particularly the *kokugaku* movement, which provided surimono with much of its materials and approach, while also looking at its neglected progressive aspects, particularly social and political. For the “genteel” nineteenth century version of *kyōka*, although a kind of poetry with less bite than early Edo *kyōka*, was not without political challenges and repercussions of its own, which can be seen in the content of the form and the culture that developed around its exchange. Here I will look at some of the social aspects of surimono, the nature and function of its groups, or “poetic societies,” and how the particular content of the form signified within these closed circles, in the accumulation of cultural capital. Of particular interest here will be the nature of still life surimono, and how these subjects produced a language that was utopian in its messages. Attention must also be given to the language of text-image interactions, these two forms combining to create a signification system resting neither in the verbal nor the visual, but the combination of the two in a new compound. These latter analyses will move in the opposite direction of the current chapter, not from abstract aesthetics to material form, but from material form to symbolic function and social ethos.

Chapter Five

Past Perfect: Yomo no Magao's Classical Revival and the Dynamics of the Surimono Exchange

Utilization of the *kakuban* format for *kyōka* presentation provided the ground for a brief but brilliant flowering of the surimono form, constituting a mere three decades in surimono's extensive history, but with arguably a majority of the masterpieces of the genre made within this short time frame. Poetry clubs and individuals, spreading vastly in number and location as the nineteenth century progressed, poured their energies and capital into the creation of unique and beautiful surimono, as a way of demonstrating their sophistication through private expressions in the woodblock medium. In Edo, *kyōka* poets exchanged surimono directly among one another in parties at the New Year, cementing close ties while showing off their personal qualities in poetry, wit, wealth and extensive knowledge. Indeed, "surimono masters" (摺物師) stood out so ostentatiously in the early nineteenth century that Shikitei Sanba 式亭三馬 (1776-1822) singled them out as a notably eccentric type in Edo society, one of the many objects of satire in his *Ukiyo toko* (浮世床・”A Floating World Barbershop”), written between 1809 and 1814.⁶⁴⁰ Mention of surimono is also made in other popular literature of the day, such as the runaway best seller *Tokaido hizakurige* (東海道膝栗毛・Shank's Mare Along the Eastern Sea Road) of Jippensha Ikku 十返舎一九 (1765-1831)⁶⁴¹ and *senryū* from the serial *Yanagidaru* (柳樽・”A

⁶⁴⁰ In a sly aside after one character's speech, Sanba writes: “This is the way woodblock surimono masters use words: a lot of insider talk that never manages to get to the point” (これは板木摺物師の詞なるゆゑ、がくやおちにてさっぱりおちず). Sanba seems to be commenting on the cryptic, self-referential language of surimono, hinting that ‘surimono-ers’ were so into this peculiar mode of expression that they had become completely incapable of directly communicating. *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū: Sharebon, Kibyōshi, Ninjōbon* (vol. 47), 336.

⁶⁴¹ In the middle volume of the eighth part of *Tōkaidō Hizakurige*, a bungling buffoon named Sōhachi shows his cultural ignorance by mistaking a common dancing girls' song as elite surimono poetry: “At last, Miss Shima, there's some verses for a surimono on the southern Gonpachi.” (イヨイヨおしまさん、ソリヤ南の権八めが摺ものゝうたじゃな).

Cask of Willow”),⁶⁴² making it evident surimono had attained status as a fixture in the popular imagination.

Through these competitive activities, now constituting a substantial subculture with the rise in number of participants, surimono actually became a field in which professionals could specialize, with exclusive surimono publishers through whom one could commission a work, special surimono studios for carving and printing, and even surimono artists, who designed illustrations of poetry as the main or sole body of their work. This growing independence of surimono production from the structures established in relation to commercial prints implied a corresponding uniqueness of content on these pieces, with a notably different sense of line and color, special printing with embossing and metals, and an individual symbolic language formed through text-image relations. The range of illustration likewise superceded the limits of *ukiyo-e*, extending from rather pure *ukiyo-e* works of actors and courtesans to pieces in virtually all other available painting styles (Kanō, Tosa, Yamato-e, Rimpa, Nanga, Kishi, Maruyama-Shijō), as well as idiosyncratic approaches, particularly in still lifes, found only on surimono. Through this special concentration, works reached new heights of technical excellence, inspiring others involved to the same. Surfaces glittered with gold and silver effects, were textured with powders, rare combinations of pigments and deep embossing, while simultaneously achieving unprecedented depth in text-image interactions and their implications. Surimono had entered its golden age.

All of this glitter and complexity was not merely for show, however. The shift to the *shikishi*-based *kakuban* and richer printing effects that took place from the early 1800s reflected a transformation in the style and content of *kyōka* poetry, away from

⁶⁴² *Yanagidaru*, Vol. 10 (1810) contains: (““Oh, a Hokusai’ she says, drawing the surimono closer with her plectrum” (北斎だねと摺物を撥でよせ). The piece is obviously a miniature in Hokusai’s distinctive style, which excites a fellow floating world performer, though she dare not touch it directly.

satire and towards a more reverent—though still often playful—utilization of tradition. As I have described in the previous chapter, the calm, genteel approach was always in the main stream of *kyōka* practice, even in parody-loving Edo, but the poetic formation presented by Shikatsube Utagaki Magao 鹿津部歌垣真顔 (1753-1829), the leading *kyōka* poet from the late 1790s, took adoration of tradition to an entirely new level. Magao assumed head position in the *kyōka* world largely by default—after death, retirement, exile or political intimidation had removed others from the field—but maintained it through hard work and entrepreneurship, traveling throughout the provinces and spreading his particular brand of *kyōka*.⁶⁴³ He taught, to the delight of the many, that mastery of *kyōka* was not difficult to obtain, the best *kyōka* consisting merely of an expression of natural thoughts and feelings in elegant form, using a mixture of classical diction and the language of everyday parlance.⁶⁴⁴ By stripping some of the Edo-based twang and sophisticated parody from the form, he thus made it available to broad numbers of people in the countryside, whom he counted as his students, and whose verses he corrected for a fee, becoming the first professional *kyōka* poet in Edo. But Magao's teachings did not stop with an assertion of Kisshū-style elegance, or a defense of *kyōka* from snarling *rakushu*. Instead, asserting that *kyōka* was an extension of classical *waka*, Magao went so far as to rename the form, calling it *haikaika* to stress its relationship with the unconventional *tanka* of the courtly poetic tradition, particularly that of the *Kokinshū*, insisting that contemporary *kyōka* be seen as its unbroken continuation. In this chapter, I will place Magao's formulation for *kyōka* not only in relation to surimono practice, but also to *kokugaku*,

⁶⁴³ A detailed case study of Magao's proselytizing work in the provinces can be found in Asaoka Shūichi's "Kasei-ki no chihō kyōkakai: Magao to Shinano no musubitsuki wo chūshin ni shite" ("The Provincial Kyōka World of the Kasei Period [1804-1829]: Focusing on the Bond Between Magao and the Shinano Area") *Kinsei Bungei* No. 36 (May, 1982) 37-52.

⁶⁴⁴ Interestingly, as though to stress his difference from the masses of poets he taught, Magao's own poetry is known as the most complex in *kyōka*, often employing difficult allusions and faint associations that one must labor to discover.

or nativist studies, which provides a significant context for interpreting Magao's teachings and actions, as well as the particular practices and content of nineteenth century surimono, in a meaningful, even startling light.

Ultimately, through the context of *kokugaku* studies, and particularly the poetic theories of Motoori Norinaga, the nineteenth century *kyōka* surimono movement in Edo can be seen as the attempt to revive an imagined classical tradition and revitalize it in the present moment, primarily through the hands of merchants. Magao's teachings, postulating *kyōka* as nothing less than a version of the classical *tanka* itself, asserted that modern composers were participating in a great tradition, in which they sat side-by-side with the venerated courtiers of old, essentially becoming their contemporary manifestations.⁶⁴⁵ When viewed in connection with Motoori's postulation that *waka* composition itself allowed one to not only communicate, but actually become one with the essential past, activating it in the present, Magao's teachings and the practices of surimono they inspired can be seen as leading to nothing less than a magical transfiguration of the present through the idealized structures of the classical past. Such an application goes beyond the usual discussions of surimono's frequent usage of classical literature and imagery, which posits modern artists and poets as appropriators of the courtly tradition for their own immediate purposes, to paint the entire nineteenth century *kyōka* surimono movement as a classical revival, not merely dabbling in the past, but attempting to become its contemporary manifestation. This implies that surimono's participants viewed themselves in the mode of talented courtiers, their prints as poetic presentation sheets, and their competitive exchange as classical *awase*, an interpretation bourn out by the style and content of *kyōka* meetings, and the works exchanged at them. Starting with a

⁶⁴⁵ Such a pose was in fact already set up by early *kyōka* anthologies, such as Nanpo's *Manzai kyōkashū*, which mingled ancients and contemporaries.

reinterpretation of poetry, which transformed *kyōka* to *haikaika*, the classical revival then extended all the way to the forms and behaviors of *kyōka* poets, most notably Magao himself.

In this process of transforming poetry and poets moreover, surimono itself became the most powerful medium of transfiguration. Unlike anthologies, it was through the privately commissioned surimono that *kyōka* practitioners could directly display their refined, “courtly” attributes, specifically skill in poetry composition, and virtually—through the ability to summon the finest hands and materials for producing their works—calligraphy and painting, but most importantly of all, broad learning and impeccable taste, presenting themselves as people of quality. The classicism that pervaded their poetry was directly transferred to surimono form, which from its shape to its bright, translucent colors and appearance of precious metals aimed at presenting an image of courtly richness and refinement, while calligraphic poetry and its illustration summoned up the past in stately, elegant fashion, applying its idealized forms to aspects of immediate reality. Nowhere was this overlay of the past onto present structures more smoothly accomplished than in this imagery, which specifically portrayed the contemporary scene with a classical elegance, or presented legendary scenes or venerable objects to illustrate modern verses. This was precisely not a *yatsushi* style reduction of the classic through the contemporary, stressing the gap and loss in value between past and present, but an overlay of the two to be taken quite seriously, the past truly and fully revitalized in contemporary form. Nor was this projection limited to illustration: in fact, the entire surimono exchange came to be seen through the tinted lenses of classicism, and playfully reworked as a modern manifestation of the *uta-awase*. At *kyōka* meetings similarly, unlike Nanpo’s *takara awase*, formal dress was not in jest, but rather an essential part of the proceedings and the rich, refined atmosphere they strove to maintain. Yet it was surimono, cast as

classical poetic presentations, which provided the richest ground on which the revival of the past could be carried out, through play and fantasy in their exchange, but also through the solid evidence of the personal sophistication, wealth and learning of its participants they presented. *Kyōka* surimono thus became, as I will shortly describe, the material manifestations of Magao's poetic code.

Applying Magao's teachings through the context of *kokugaku* philosophy in this manner, the surimono exchanges can ultimately be seen as a grand masquerade, of merchants in the role of courtiers, tempting us to dismiss it as just so much make-believe. But the separation of *rakushu* from *kyōka* did not necessarily mean the end of *kyōka*'s political role, and indeed, we can find in these surimono exchanges a new sense of merchant pride, a subversive use of wealth, as well as a campaign by this class to position itself as the worthy inheritors of high culture. There are several aspects of the surimono exchanges through which we can analyze their social and political functions. First, the importance of the group, or "poetic society" itself, a significant subculture with its own rules and means of giving support, meaning and even identity to its members must be examined. In relation to this closed circuit of distribution and reception, special codes and methods of reading surimono developed, combining images and texts in cultural references that posited giver and receiver as like-minded beings, should be viewed in the context of the private surimono exchanges. The space of play and corresponding freedom of imagination created by these exchanges, I argue, allow surimono images to be read as virtual realities, making their exchange nothing less than exercises in utopian politics. Whether these were directly related to imperial restorationism, as has been suggested, an implicit message of support for the Kyōto Court, is a tenuous subject, which requires objective treatment. The last part of this chapter will thus be the most speculative of the dissertation, attempting to imagine how surimono might have been seen and

understood in their original social context, within the closed and private space of the exchanges. But there can be little doubt that surimono, whatever their artistic and literary qualities, were absolutely political, subversively breaking sumptuary laws for merchants and going far beyond the level of knowledge they were supposed to maintain, providing a new identity for this class, officially the lowest in the Tokugawa order.

The Rise of Shikatsube Magao: Shogunal Politics and Edo Popular Culture

Both *kyōka* and the various uses of private printing rose to popularity in Edo, not coincidentally, during the so-called Tanuma Era, a quarter century (1760-1786) in which government policy was increasingly set by Senior Councilor Tanuma Okitsugu 田沼意次 (1719-1788), who favored a hands-off, *laisse faire* approach to economics and to some extent even public administration.⁶⁴⁶ Though the policies of the Tanuma regime did succeed in establishing a product-based economy and increased wealth, while stimulating fruitful merchant-samurai interaction by involving powerful merchants in the shaping of government fiscal policy, it has been criticized for its relative laxness in moral rule outwardly, corresponding with its own internal

⁶⁴⁶ Descriptions of the easy-going (some would say fundamentally corrupt) Tanuma regime and the reaffirmation of Confucian morality and *bakufu* power over public affairs in the Matsudaira Sadanobu regime that followed it form an essential base for making sense of transformations in *chōnin* popular culture between the 1760s and 1800s, and can be found in many works on art and literature, as well as more standard histories. My summary draws from such diverse sources as political biographies—John Whitney Hall’s *Tanuma Okitsugu: Forerunner of Modern Japan*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955) and Herman Ooms’ *Charismatic Bureaucrat: A Political Biography of Matsudaira Sadanobu* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1975)—institutional histories—Hall and Marius Jansen, eds. *Studies in the Institutional History of Early Modern Japan* (Princeton University Press, 1968) and *The Cambridge History of Japan: Volume Five. The Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 50-61, plus Conrad Totman’s *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1600-1843* (University of California Press, 1988), 220-229—and humanistic studies—especially Timon Screech’s insightful *The Shogun’s Painted Culture: Fear and Creativity in the Japanese States 1760-1829* (London: Reaktion, 2000), Haruko Iwasaki’s “Portrait of a Daimyō: Comical Fiction by Matsudaira Sadanobu” in *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (Spring 1983) 1-19, Peter Kornicki’s “*Nishiki no Ura*: An Instance of Censorship and the Structure of a *Sharebon*” in *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Summer 1977) 153-188, and Hara Fumihiko in Edo-Tōkyō Museum, eds. *Nishikie no tanjō: Edo shomin bunka no kaika* (Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 1996), 17-18.

corruption of “government for sale.” This easygoing atmosphere of bribes and parties led to concentrations of wealth on the part of those who were able to buy policy, and those with the power to sell it. Some *senryū* of the time perhaps describe the general atmosphere of bribery best:

<i>Yakunin no</i>	The official's baby boy
<i>Ko wa niginigi wo</i>	Look how quickly he's learned
<i>Yoku oboe</i>	To open and close his fist
<i>Sode no shita</i>	The bottom of [the official's] sleeves
<i>Tabi kasanarite</i>	From repeated use
<i>Hokorobiru</i>	Worn through ⁶⁴⁷

But despite the “moral failings” of the Tanuma regime in traditional terms, or perhaps precisely because it cared more about wealth than Confucian virtues, its policies did serve to enhance the economy, stimulating trade and giving rise to a luxury market, among many other changes. A largely forgotten study by historian and modernization theorist John Whitney Hall, in fact, actually praises the corrupt Tanuma as a “forerunner of modern Japan” in his free thinking and progressive economic policies, a far cry from the desire for stasis that had led his predecessors to stifle economic growth.⁶⁴⁸ Certainly we can see the effects of Tanuma's policies in the events of the 1760s-1780s explored in previous chapters, such as the Meiwa calendar parties, which required a group of people with substantial excess wealth to commission a new kind of print in full color, as well as the social freedom for samurai and commoners to intermingle, despite earlier official statements on the importance of maintaining strict hierarchies. The literary and artistic freedom that allowed for the development of a robust popular culture, supported, of course, by a populace with the excess wealth to invest in these productions, as well as a more elite group with the venture capital to

⁶⁴⁷ 役人の子はにぎにぎをよく覚え from the first series of *Yanagidaru*, 1765, and 袖の下たび重なりてほころびる from *Senryūhyō manku-awase*, 1767.

⁶⁴⁸ Tanuma Okitsugu: Forerunner of Modern Japan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955).

produce them, are all factors pointing at the Tanuma Regime and its role in fostering, however unintentionally, the experiments of *gesaku* and *ukiyo-e* during these decades. There has been a tendency to look down on Tanuma rule for the personal immorality of its administrators, rather than objectively examining the effects of its policies. But it seems hardly likely—as some would have it—that popular culture flourished in the 1760s to 80s *in spite of* the “wicked” Tanuma regime, no matter what frustrations and angers its injustices may have caused, so much as *because of* it, flavoring in fact, the nature of Edo humor, as well as providing conditions for its existence.

Events, in fact, rather than overt failures of policy, are what in large measure seem to have undone the Tanuma regime in the mid 1780s. First, the years of Tanuma rule were marked by a seemingly endless series of natural disasters, floods, draughts and diseases, culminating with the eruption of Mt. Asama in 1783, which killed as many as 20,000 immediately, but exponents of that number in the following years, in massive famines caused by the devastating destruction of farmland over several domains and continuously poor weather conditions brought about in part by Asama’s ashes. Such events, of course, were never simply taken as random acts of nature, but represented the judgment of heaven, and its displeasure was seen to be directed immediately at the Tanuma family in the same year, when Okitsugu’s son and successor was murdered by an embittered palace guard. Public opinion began to turn against Tanuma, whose rise to power from obscurity was said to be against the order of things, but the favor of the shogun, Tokugawa Ieharu 徳川家治 (1737-1786) preserved him. When Ieharu died, however, Tanuma was quickly dispatched, most of his holdings confiscated, his domain taken away and castle demolished, and he himself forced into retirement in his lower residence, where he died within two years. The new Senior Councilor and setter of policy was Matsudaira Sadanobu 松平定信 (1758-1829), who favored a return to strict government rule based on moral principle.

With his staunch conservatism, insisting that samurai should engage in military arts and letters (文武・*bunbu*), not parties and frivolous pleasures, Matsudaira and his policies also quickly became their own topic for satirical poetry:

<i>Yo no naka ni</i>	In all the world
<i>Ka hodo urusaki</i>	There's nothing so pestering:
<i>Mono wa nashi</i>	A buzzing mosquito
<i>Bunbu to iute</i>	Going "bunbu," "bunbu"--
<i>Yoru mo nemurezu</i>	I can't even sleep at night ⁶⁴⁹

But there was little leeway for humor within the Matsudaira administration, the effects of whose oppression the last line of this *rakushu* suggests. When rumors began to spread that Ōta Nanpo was the *bunbu* author, he felt obliged to publicly deny that he had any part in it, before unfavorable attention turned his way.⁶⁵⁰ The author of a *gesaku* parodying the ideal of *bunbu* was not so fortunate, and when summoned to appear before officials, chose suicide rather than face the threat of punishment.

Nanpo, the outstanding leader of the *kyōka* movement at the time, determined in 1787 that it was time for him to retire from this role, before he, as a samurai, incurred a similar wrath. Although he remained active in *kyōka* composition privately, under the name Shokusanjin (蜀山人), and still had somewhat of an influence on matters in the *kyōka* world from outside, he ceased to direct his namesake Yomo group and its activities.⁶⁵¹ Nor was he the only samurai so intimidated away from public participation in *kyōka*. Others of this ruling class remained active within the

⁶⁴⁹ 世の中にかほどうるさきものはなしぶんぶというて夜も眠れず。Quoted from Teruoka Yasutaka and Gunji Masakatsu, *Edo shimin bungaku no kaika* (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1967), 263. The sound of a mosquito ("bunbun") matches Matsudaira's repetitious promulgation of *bunbu*. *Kahodo urusaki* can mean "as loud as a mosquito" or "as bothersome as this." *Bunbu* was the catch phrase for anti-government protest in the late 1780s, and was also used in several banned *kibyōshi* (see Kornicki, 1977), 154-157.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid. See also Keene (1976), 521.

⁶⁵¹ Even after hanging up the name "Yomo no Akara," Nanpo continued to create *kyōka* as Shokusanjin, especially as inscriptions on *ukiyo-e* paintings, though notably not on surimono. He also added prefaces and notes to a number of *kyōka* books, while actively writing memoirs about his experiences in the popular movements of the late eighteenth century.

movement—most notably Kisshū and Akera, who became *kyōka*’s prominent leaders in the void left by Nanpo—but toned down the satirical aspects of their verses. For Kisshū, this was no great transformation, but when Akera himself began to proclaim: “*kyōka* is nothing other than unconventional *waka*,”⁶⁵² a sea change in the direction of the *kyōka* movement was evident. The style of Kisshū had risen again to the fore, stressing elegance and light comedy, aspects that were hardly likely to draw critical attention from government watchers. Pupils of his lineage, through his early associate and follower Moto no Mokuami, were thus lifted to more prominent positions in the *kyōka* world. Under the influence of Kisshū and Kankō, the “four heavenly guardians” (四天皇・*shitenno*) of *kyōka*, for example, were said to be Mokuami’s pupils Baba no Kinrachi 馬場金埒 (1751-1807) and Shikatsube Magao, who led the Sukiya-ren (数奇屋連), plus Tsuburi no Hikaru つむりの光 (1754-1796) and Yadoya no Meshimori 宿屋飯盛 (1753-1830), originally Yomo poets. All of these men were “second generation” *kyōka* poets, relatively young *chōnin* (not of the samurai class), who were seen to be the future of *kyōka*. But the 1790s saw further unexpected events and shake-ups. In 1790 Nanpo’s longtime friend Hezutsu Tōsaku passed away, followed by Tsuburi no Hikari (“Shiny Pate”) in 1796. Meshimori, also known as *kokugaku* scholar Ishikawa Masamochi (石川雅望) was exiled from Edo in 1791, supposedly for violations at his inn, and not permitted to return to the city until more than a decade later. Meanwhile, Kinrachi became increasingly involved in his family’s money exchange business, devoting less of his time to *kyōka*.⁶⁵³ By 1796, Magao (“Straight-Faced”) was the only present and active member of the *shitenno*, the leading poet alongside the aging Kankō and Kisshū, each of whom passed away

⁶⁵² 狂歌は歌の俳諧也。See Mizuno (1971), 439

⁶⁵³ My account here follows closely that of Karagoromo Kisshū’s preface to a 1797 *Kyōka* anthology, in which he undercut Magao by describing the circumstances of his rise as the leader of the *kyōka* world.

around the turn of the nineteenth century.⁶⁵⁴ Recognizing Magao as the sole protector of the *kyōka* movement, Nanpo bequeathed the Yomo name to Magao in this year, thus virtually crowning him as his successor.⁶⁵⁵ Within a decade, thus, the transformation of the *kyōka* realm was complete. Magao, a backward-looking conservative of the Kisshū lineage, albeit with a unique taste and style, would be the leading figure in *kyōka* for the next thirty years.

Shikatsube (Yomo) Magao, who also went under the names Kyōkadō, Utagaki and Haikaikajō (狂歌堂, 歌垣, 俳諧歌場), was born Kitagawa Kihei (北川喜兵衛) in 1753, and remained actively involved in literature to his death at age 77 (by the traditional count) in 1829. Of merchant background, he supported himself primarily until the 1790s by running a *shiruko* (汁粉・sweet bean soup) shop, which had passed down through generations of his family, in the Sukiwabashi (数寄屋橋) section of Edo,⁶⁵⁶ later supplementing his income as a landlord. Magao initially entered the *gesaku* world as a fiction writer, rather than as a poet, studying under the first great *kibyoshi* author, Koikawa Harumachi 恋川春町 (1744-89), and publishing a number of works under the pseudonym Koikawa Sukimachi (恋川好町), most notably *Takarayama kin no adauchi* (宝山金の仇討・“Vengeance of Gold at Treasure Mountain”). In 1781, however, he met Nanpo for the first time, and found he had a strong affinity for *kyōka*, quickly impressing others with his cleverness. By the time of the breakthrough anthologies of 1783, he was already a leading figure in *kyōka*, and

⁶⁵⁴ Kankō in 1800, Kisshū in 1802.

⁶⁵⁵ In “Shikatsubei Magao to Sukiya-ren” (*Kokugo to kokubungaku*, vol. 76 No. 8, 1999, 55-69) Kobayashi Fumiko made an extremely important correction to the historical record regarding this transfer: Nanpo did not give Magao leadership of his own group, the Yomo, but dissolving this group, allowed Magao to take the Yomo name for his own group, the Sukiya-ren. From that time forth, the Sukiya-ren was known as the Yomo. But Magao was under no obligation to clarify these complexities for others, and people from the countryside, who had heard of Yomo no Akara (Nanpo) assumed that Magao was his successor in every sense. Magao’s reformed Yomo (formerly Sukiya) group became the largest *kyōka* group in the land, with thousands of members in loose, countryside alliances.

⁶⁵⁶ The Sukiwabashi Bridge crossed the outer moat of Edo Castle, in an area on the border of contemporary Ginza and Yurakuchō (Chiyoda-ku). Magao lived on the outer part of the moat, where he had his shop. The moat was filled in and became Sukiwabashi park in the modern era.

both works included verses by him, notably a dozen in Kisshū's *Kyōka wakanashū* (Nanpo himself had only four) and three in Nanpo's *Kyōka manzaishu*. Magao was among the first ten of fifty contemporary poets chosen for portraiture in Kitao Masanobu's 1785 *Azumaburi kyōka bunko* (Figure 42),⁶⁵⁷ and Masanobu (Santō Kyōden) also singled him out as one of five poets to depict in a set of single sheet color prints of *kyōka* masters produced shortly thereafter (Figure 43).⁶⁵⁸ Magao's early and close connections with *ukiyo-e* artists is apparent in the leading role he took in the publication of the 1789 New Year anthology *Waka Ebisu* (わかゑびす・”The Youthful Ebisu,” but also “The Ebisu of *Waka* [Poetry]”), illustrated by Utamaro and published by Tsutaya Jūzaburo, which contained a significant preface by Magao.⁶⁵⁹ At Nanpo's urging, Magao had also created a new *kyōka ren* in his area (early *kyōka* groups being established primarily by region rather than aesthetic differentiation), leading it with Baba Kinrachi. His first major publication with this group came in 1791, when he edited the *Kyōka sukiya buro* (狂歌数奇屋風呂・“A Bath of Beloved *Kyōka* from Sukiya”),⁶⁶⁰ while his second anthology, the *Dōre hyakunin isshu* (どうれ百人一首・“As Expected, The Hundred Poets, One Verse Each”)⁶⁶¹ of 1793 was a broader reaching publication, with illustration by Masanobu (Kyōden). Still, neither of these was as important as his leading role among the editorial group for the New

⁶⁵⁷ The order of poets was not strictly hierarchical, but the first ten included Nanpo, Akeru, Tōsaku, Manzōtei, Meshimori and Kinrachi, suggesting that the “stars” were pushed to the fore. Magao was the eighth poet appearing.

⁶⁵⁸ Four works are currently known from this set, likely in five pieces after the *otokodate*, or six after the *rokkasen*. The others include Nanpo (Yomo no Akara), Yadoya Meshimori, and Narutaki no Otondo. The set probably dates c.1785-6. See Tim Clark “Some Portraits of *Kyōka* Poets by Kitao Masanobu” in *Orientations* (Jan/Feb 2004), 36-41.

⁶⁵⁹ See Keyes “Envisioning the Past: Utamaro's Album *Waka Ebisu*” in Hillier, Ed. (1979).

⁶⁶⁰ Sukiya, the name of Magao's poetry group, after the place designation of his residence, literally means “like” or “love.” *Kyōka sukiya* thus also means “we love *kyōka*.”

⁶⁶¹ The opening *dōre* has numerous meanings, including also “attention please!” and “what?” as well as something following the line of logic and so predictable.



鹿都部真顔(吾妻曲狂歌文庫)

Figure 42: A Portrait of Shikatsube Magao by Kitao Masanobu (Santō Kyōden), from the *Gojūnin isshu – Azumaburi Kyōka Bunko* of 1786.



Figure 43: A *Nigao-e* (“Likeness Portrait”) of Shikatsube Magao from a set of color prints by Kitao Masanobu (Santō Kyōden), c.1785-6.

Year publication (*kyōka saitanshū*)⁶⁶² *Edo Murasaki* (江戸紫・“Edo’s Regal Purple”) of 1796, a gorgeous album with illustration by Utamaro, Hokusai and others, which publicly announced Magao’s arrival at the forefront of the *kyōka* world.⁶⁶³

By 1796, therefore, Magao had already built a fairly distinguished record as a *gesakusha* and *kyōka* poet, appearing in numerous publications, and directing yet others under his name. Had his literary career ended then, he would not be counted among the top figures in these fields, but he would not be entirely forgotten either. On receiving the Yomo name in this year, however, Magao was given new life. For to those with only vague knowledge of *kyōka*, particularly people in the provinces, the name Yomo was virtually synonymous with *kyōka*, Nanpo being by far the most celebrated and best-known poet. Although in fact a student of Moto no Mokuami, with quite a different sense of *kyōka* than Nanpo’s, by taking and prominently using the Yomo name, Magao appeared to most as Nanpo’s chief disciple and chosen successor, a role he was willing to exploit for the power it gave him.⁶⁶⁴ He began to take frequent teaching tours of the countryside, gathering students into local branches of his Yomo Group and indoctrinating them in his brand of *kyōka* poetry.⁶⁶⁵ Taking Akera Kankō’s late formulation of *kyōka* as “*uta no haikai*” (unconventional *waka*) to its extreme, Magao insisted that *kyōka* should be an elegant, refined type of poetry, in

⁶⁶² The little discussed connection between *haikai* and *kyōka* practices is apparent in a work like this. In fact, part of the complexity that Edo *kyōka*, as opposed to earlier practices of *kyōka*, possessed was due to its assumption of the structures set up for *haikai*, including *kyōka* groups, *kyōka tsukinami* (monthly meetings), and the forms of publications, whether commercial books, memorial pamphlets or surimono. Like *haikai*, *kyōka* also had a clear social orientation: even though not linked, the purpose of *kyōka* was to entertain and delight others with spontaneous composition.

⁶⁶³ This work included an important preface by Nanpo, discussing his relationship with Magao, and his decision to bequeath the Yomo name to him. In typically punning fashion, Nanpo played on the place name of Magao’s shop and its riverside location to call him a “beloved friend,” adding additional wordplay on “riverbank” and “poetry master,” “deep water” and “deep thinker.” (*Koko ni Shikatsube Magao fukaku sukiya no kashi no omoi asakarazu...*)

⁶⁶⁴ In truth, Magao had progressively moved away from Moto no Mokuami’s sphere of influence after the creation of the Sukiya Group, moving closer to Nanpo, though he was never a direct pupil.

⁶⁶⁵ Magao’s multiple visits to far away Shinano, for example, are detailed through period accounts in Asaoka (1982), 40-43.

which people expressed their ordinary thoughts and feelings through classical poetic form and technique. His stance in relation to the sardonic, sometimes crude *Tenmei kyōka* of Akera, Nanpo, Meshimori and others can thus be seen as in many ways parallel to that of the conservative Matsunaga Teitoku in relation to the iconoclastic *haikai* preceding him; like Teitoku, Magao sought to purify *kyōka* by raising its level of diction and subject matter, while reaffirming the importance of established literary practices as a guide for composition, thus placing a runaway form back within the poetic tradition. For those without the penetrating understanding and accompanying sense of irony that drove the sarcasm of Akera, Nanpo and others, Magao's formulation that *kyōka* was nothing more than an elegant expression of natural thoughts and feelings was received as a welcome teaching that made *kyōka* available to anyone with even a basic knowledge of classical *waka* and its devices. Magao also profited—financially, but intellectually as well—from his proselytizing missions, which raised the number of *kyōka* devotees into the thousands, charging his disciples a silver *ryō* for every hundred verses he corrected, as well as receiving honorariums for his visits and appearances with students on surimono. In this manner, Magao became the first professional *kyōka* poet in Edo, giving up his *shiruko* shop and concentrating on teaching, composition and publication.⁶⁶⁶

In sum, Magao edited or added prefaces to some forty additional *kyōka* books after the three already mentioned to 1796, becoming one of the most prolific publishers of *kyōka* in book form, second in fact only to his rival Yadoya no

⁶⁶⁶ Magao's subsequent professionalization of *kyōka* was viewed with some distaste by Nanpo and Kisshū. Nanpo stated that making a profession of *kyōka* was like a "doctor coming from the family of a money-seeking prospector," while Kisshū actually sought to undercut Magao by describing the circumstances leading to his rise to prominence in the *kyōka* world, implying it was only matters of fortune, not great talent, that buoyed Magao up. He also called Magao a "tyrant," and compared him to Niō, one of the fierce heavenly guardians, with the phrase "waraji dai-ō" ("great straw sandal king"), hinting at Magao's commoner background. See Suga Chikuho's *Kinsei kyōka shi* (Tokyo: Nisshin Shoin, 1940), 332-333.

Meshimori.⁶⁶⁷ For most of his thousands of students though, the only chance of appearing in print and being recognized was through the private commissioning of a surimono, and many of these from the nineteenth century bear the names of minor poets in their first two or three entries, capped by a poem by Magao, or one of his leading disciples or associates in Edo, who were paid for their input. In this manner, Magao became the most prolific contributor to surimono, his name in the position of honor on approximately 8% of all nineteenth century Edo *kyōka* surimono, thereby allowing minor poets to appear in print with a celebrated figure.⁶⁶⁸ But still more important than Magao's prolific personal input on surimono was the influence of his teachings and poetic style, which affected virtually all surimono. Already by the mid-1790s Magao's classicism—though at this point it must be seen as part of a general trend in *kyōka* after the Kansei Reforms of Sadanobu—was having an influence on the subject matter and approach of surimono, and this became all the stronger as the nineteenth century progressed.⁶⁶⁹ For through his travels and lectures, Magao not only began to formulate a clearer sense of his own poetics, but also to come in contact with *kokugaku* scholars with similar interests to his own, who helped him to refine his vision of the relation of *kyōka* poetry to the past.⁶⁷⁰ Thus in the prefaces to his *kyōka* publications, which, loose and associative as they are, offer evidence of his developing sense of *kyōka* poetics and historicity, Magao begins to shape fairly radical ideas about the importance and legacy of *kyōka*, freely reapplying proclamations about poetry and its relationship with the past from none other than the leading *kokugaku* master of the time, Motoori Norinaga. Magao's final break with *kyōka* as it had been practiced in

⁶⁶⁷ 42 works were edited or prefaced by Magao, as opposed to 69 by Meshimori. These numbers are drawn from my survey of the *Kyōka shomoku shūsei*.

⁶⁶⁸ This percentage is based a survey of the surimono appearing in the seven major English and Japanese language publications on the subject published since 1979, plus a few other sources for the museums and collections not represented in them. See Introduction, note # 31.

⁶⁶⁹ Mizuno (1971), 439

⁶⁷⁰ Hamada (1970) 166.

Edo is formalized c.1807-8—perhaps not coincidentally at exactly that moment when surimono was transitioning to its new *shikishi* format—in Magao’s attempt to completely rename the *kyōka* form, titling it *haikaika*, after the irregular *waka* of the *Kokinshū*. In so doing, Magao essentially redefined *kyōka* as not “crazy” verse, a complete other to the standards and practices of poetry, but rather as an unconventional variation of *waka* that had always been part of the main poetic tradition. Affirming *kyōka* thus as a classical form, Magao directed attention away from the insane inversions of its *Tenmei* type, offering in their place the opportunity to participate in an age-old form, and communicate in this manner with the glories of the past, making them come alive in the present.

It is this configuration that informs nineteenth century surimono, even those of the anti-Magao faction that rose shortly after his *haikaika* pronouncements and publications with this name, led by Yadoya Meshimori, who had secretly returned to Edo from exile in 1805. Although the nineteenth century *kyōka* world is often portrayed as a split between the classical revivalist Magao and the more satirical and iconoclastic Meshimori, and some distinctions along these lines can be seen in their respective anthologies, in fact, Magao’s aesthetics clearly dominate in the realm of surimono and its illustration, even in works produced by Meshimori’s Gogawa (五側 • “Group of Five”). This influence can be seen not only in surimono’s overt classicism, particularly after the shift to the *shikishi* format, with poems based on celebrated models, titles and pictorial subjects taken from canonical literature, and coloring and printing technique giving an impression of courtly refinement, but also in the very functioning of its texts and images in concert, which follows the structure inherent in Magao’s mature poetics, not Meshimori’s. For Magao, like the surimono on which he so often appeared, delighted in bringing together diverse aspects of the classical world through reference, quotation and association in his poetry, not

ridiculing or critiquing these sources, but merely placing them in relation to one another to let diverse aspects of the past communicate with one another. The result was an odd mixture of light and heavy, with mind numbingly complex layers of allusion, but allusions so superficially skimmed across that an elegant, coolly learned effect was created. These complicated webs of allusion created in his poems are precisely those found in the signification processes of *surimono* of Magao's heyday, which combine images and texts to create networks of interlocking connections, linking elements of the past and tying them to the present moment. This temporal dimension, as well as the formalism of the *surimono* exchanges, can be seen in direct relation to Magao's revivalist agenda, ultimately painting the *surimono* movement as the rebirth of classical forms and practices in the present world. It is little wonder, then, that Meshimori chose to concentrate on editing and adding prefaces to *kyōka* anthologies (he was involved in some 70 of them), leaving the field of *surimono*, by its nature as a New Year poetic presentation so well suited to Magao's aesthetics, largely to him. Let me now focus in more closely to look at some of Magao's poetry, and the development of his personal code of aesthetics in his writings, in relation to the development of *kyōka* *surimono*.

The Poetry of Yomo no Magao and the Form and Function of *Kyōka* *Surimono*

Magao, though by far the longest lasting leader of the *kyōka* movement, who spread practice of the form throughout Japan and had more total publications and pupils under his name than any other *kyōka* poet, is nevertheless considered but a minor figure in most literary histories. When his name is mentioned, it is typically in the negative, as the man who destroyed the spirit of *kyōka*, dimming its satirical fire to an empty, warm complacency, or as the "effete" poet who cared more about personal

reputation and wealth than was proper for one of his station.⁶⁷¹ The pompous attitude that led to his lifestyle excesses—meeting with students only from behind *sudare* blinds, wearing traditional court dress to *kyōka* parties, arranging to receive honorary title and rank from Kyōto—has also been found underlying much of his poetry, which on the one hand utilized cryptic references, complex puns and distant associative leaps to create an air of learned difficulty, while on the other favoring the superficially pretty and pure to the sharp and ironic tones of early *kyōka*. But although Magao’s abilities as a poet can be critiqued by the modern standards of literary studies, his historical influence cannot: it was under his command and largely through his efforts that *kyōka* spread far beyond Edo, so that the majority of provincial poets considered Magao their master. For the surimono movement as well, Magao must be considered a central, and even formative influence. Although the practice of surimono itself long precedes his rise to the leading position in the *kyōka* world, the particular form that surimono takes in nineteenth century Edo is entirely in keeping with those aspects of Magao’s poetry described above, favoring classical gentility, a learned, riddle-like quality, beautiful subjects and sparkling effects. It is from this perspective that Magao must be discussed as the leading figure in the Edo surimono movement, his poetry and teachings directing not only fellow students, but also the material manifestation of his brand of poetics in surimono.

Magao’s almost half-century career as a *kyōka* poet is also one of the longest in the form, rivaled only by Nanpo and Meshimori, and by contrasting his early compositions, made under the influence of Nanpo and the ideals of Tenmei *kyōka*, with his mature work as leader of his Yomo Group, we can see a dramatic change in

⁶⁷¹ See Kasuya Hiroki in Chiba (1997), 23. It was Donald Keene who dubbed Magao “genteel” and “effete” in his landmark study of Tokugawa literature, though his criticism follows that of earlier *kyōka* commentators, especially Gunji and Teruoka (1967). See also Mizuno (1971), 439. The “decadent” label of nineteenth century *kyōka* goes along with that of *ukiyo-e*, and like the latter, clearly requires reexamination.

aesthetics over the course of his life. Consider, for example, these representative poems from each period with similar visual stimuli in the motif of white snow. Nanpo's *Manzai kyokashu* of 1783 presented a Magao verse typical of early *kyōka*'s emphasis on lower class materialism, clashing with the lack of worldly, economic consciousness in classical poetry:

<i>Shirayuki no</i>	The falling white snow
<i>Furu shakusen no</i>	Of old debt piles up
<i>Toshi tsumori</i>	As the year passes on--
<i>Harawade ie mo</i>	If I can't pay and brush it off
<i>Yoko ni nenikeri</i>	My house will be broke too ⁶⁷²

In stark contrast to this verse of poverty and desperation is Magao's "snow" poem from his 1815 *Haikaika kyōdai hyakushū* (俳諧歌兄弟百集・"One Hundred *Haikaika* Brother Poems"):

<i>Atarashiki</i>	With the beginning
<i>Toshi no hajime to</i>	Of a new year
<i>Yo no naka e</i>	This world of ours
<i>Yogorenu yuki wo</i>	In unsullied snow is blanketed--
<i>Shikeru kyō kana</i>	This very day! ⁶⁷³

The transformation from a worldly, urban experience of economic uncertainty and stress, expressed with complex layers of puns and treated with a gritty, cavalier attitude, to the quiet appreciation of a natural world whose very movements are taken as religiously symbolic, is so striking that it scarcely needs underlining. The falling snow at the end of the year in the early poem is viewed by a mind so obsessed with worldly problems that the snow itself is hardly seen, and so far beyond desperation

⁶⁷² しら雪のふる借錢の年つもりはらはで家も横になりけり, from *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, vol. 47, 535, no.293. The poem hinges on several layers of wordplay: *furu*, meaning both "old" and "fall," *harau*, meaning both "pay" and "sweep"/"brush off," and *yoko ni neru*, literally "sleep on one's side" but slang for "giving up on paying one's debts." The poem follows the logic of snow and debt: if it builds up without being removed, the house, literally and figuratively, crashes. The year-end was the time for paying off one's debts, as well as of cold, snowy weather.

⁶⁷³ あたらしき年のはじめと世の中へよごれぬ雪しける今日哉. *Edo kyōkabon senshū* 江戸狂歌本選集 Vol.9. (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 1998), 87

that it can only laugh at itself. Whiteness here stands for oblivion, not purity. The same visual stimulus is perceived in the later poem by a mind apparently removed from earthly troubles, reveling in the magical spirit of the New Year, which presents a blank slate and makes all things pure again. The recognition that the natural movement of the snow matches the spiritual qualities of the day is expressed with childlike simplicity and directness, without any of the complexity of puns and wordplay, but also without humor. While the earlier poem is animated by the desperation of a speaker who views the world through his personal problems, yet with a comic spirit, the later relies essentially on the animation of the natural world, positing a meaningful consciousness behind the timing of the snowfall, with a consequent attitude of awe that the reader must share to be moved by. And so although the first poem can easily involve the reader in its world, if only as a sympathetic onlooker, the second depends on the reader already having a similar attitude towards nature and its meaning, implying that it is not for the cynical, who would be turned off by its patent seriousness and quasi-religious feeling. One could hardly imagine two more completely different approaches to similar materials, deriving from a poet of the same name, but two very distinct poetic consciousnesses.

The transition between these poems also represents that from Tenmei to Kasei *kyōka*, or more accurately put in Magao's own terminology, from *kyōka* to *haikaika*. The latter verse represents Magao's attempt, this is to say, to participate in the high tradition of classical *waka*, through the model of its unconventional variant, using a simple, but elegant, version of everyday language to express thoughts and feelings just as they come to mind, in the form of *tanka*. Here the aim is not humor, or even a playful use of the past, but the attempt to create a *Kokinshū*-style light verse, based on a simple conceit and awareness of the natural world. Although far more straightforward than most of Magao's verses, and thus not one of his layered poems

reflected in the use of complex text-image interactions in many surimono's signification processes, it is the tone of this verse that is remarkable, and relates closely to the sort of quiet, reverent imagery that appears on many *kyōka* surimono. One could, for example, easily imagine this verse illustrated, utilizing rounded lines to depict houses and objects under snow, with a sprinkling of *gofun* or silver powder to give a snowy gloss, in a manner impossible to conceive on surimono for the ragged, tough urban consciousness of the Tenmei verse. Although the latter has been judged in literary studies to be the superior and more important type of poetry, its qualities would have been quite out of place on a poetry presentation sheet, not appropriate for a seasonal gift of this sort. The spirit of *haikaika*, by contrast, stressing elegance and a quasi-religious approach to the objects of everyday life, seen with a classical glow, was fully suited to such works, and became intimately connected with the visual qualities of surimono illustration in the nineteenth century. In fact, one could argue for a reciprocal relationship here between surimono and *haikaika*, particularly in the attitude shown in this poem towards the New Year, with its sense of purity and holiness in the start of the new seasonal cycle. Poetry and image feed back into each other in this general manner, supporting one another's attitudes and approaches to the things of the world.

This broad relationship between Magao's conservative poetics and the form of surimono can be seen clearly in one of the earliest known works in true *shikishi* format, c.1800-1805, commissioned by a provincial female poet and disciple of Magao, Seifūtei Isako (清風亭いさ子), and illustrated by Hishikawa Sōri 菱川宗理 (a.1790-1810), an early pupil of Hokusai who also favored refined, courtly themes in his work (Figure 44). This surimono is unusual for including two verses by Isako, one a *kyōka* and the other a *hokku*, suggesting her connections to both types of poetic circles. Both, however, are tinged with classicism:



Figure 44: “The *Kakizome*.” A *shikishi-ban* surimono for a New Year, c. 1800-1805, with verses (*kyōka* and *hokku*) by Seifūtei Isako and Yomo no Magao, and illustration by Hishikawa Sōri.

<i>Hiraki mireba</i>	Opening the Shining Genji
<i>Kaze hikaru nari</i>	Window and looking out
<i>Genji mado</i>	The breezes glitter
<i>Ume ga e arite</i>	A plum branch is there
<i>Kaoru taishō</i>	Fragrant as Prince Kaoru ⁶⁷⁴

<i>Toshidoshi ya</i>	Year after year--
<i>Mata omoshiroki</i>	And still intriguing
<i>Haru no iro</i>	These colors of spring ⁶⁷⁵

To these, Magao has added a verse laden with classical feeling, though it could just as well describe a present day scene:

<i>Donchō wa</i>	The heavy curtains
<i>Shimai kachō wa</i>	Shut away, mosquito nets
<i>Mada tsuranu</i>	Not yet hung
<i>Nedoko nagara no</i>	From bed I watch
<i>Haru no akebono</i>	The sunrise of spring ⁶⁷⁶

Magao's unusually simple verse, without layers or punning, attempts to capture the spirit of the New Year's dawn, unencumbered by worries and full of leisure. Without curtains or nets, or reasons yet to rise, the speaker sprawls in bed with a clear view of the first sunrise of the year outside, the final line suggesting a reverent feeling reminiscent of the opening lines of Sei Shonagon's *Makura no sōshi* (枕草紙・*Pillow Book*). For these verses, Sōri has created an early spring interior scene that picks up on these classical references and enhances them. At first glance, we might think Sōri has created here a scene from *Genji* or the *Pillow Book*, for with the open view to the garden and elegant interior, the charming serving girl bringing writing implements for the *kakizome* to the refined woman at right, who kneels before a

⁶⁷⁴ ひらきみれは風光るなり源氏窓梅か枝ありてかほる大将. An alternate reading of the last character, offered in the Hiraki Museum catalogue of the Spencer Collection, would make the final phrase 大福, meaning great fortune, as well as the name of a plump, fragrant bean cake. The poem is based on the so-called "Genji window," a bell-shaped, lacquer framed window in wealthy houses. This summons up "Hikaru Genji," the "Shining Prince" of the courtly romance (*hikaru nari Genji*) and thus Prince Kaoru (literally "fragrant"). The remainder is all related spring imagery.

⁶⁷⁵ 年々や又おもしろき春の色

⁶⁷⁶ 緞帳はしまい蚊帳はまた釣らぬ寝床なからの春の曙. I have slightly altered Keyes' transliteration at the end of the fourth line (*mo* to *no*)

reading stand, the atmosphere has all of the refinement associated with these classics. But contemporary elements in the image, the pipe the woman smokes, the Tokugawa-style books, the scene from the *Ukifune* chapter of *Genji* on the heater with a modern *Genji mon*, the hairstyles and dress of the figures, clearly inform us that this is the present day pleasure quarters.⁶⁷⁷ In short, Sōri's illustration completes what the verses themselves suggest, reflecting back on their composers: the elegant past has here been melded onto the present, just as the first poem puts a classic into the modern scene with puns or the last does in spirit. If we take the illustration as a portrait of Seifūtei Isako, as Roger Keyes has suggested,⁶⁷⁸ then the print directly implies that contemporary poets like Isako and Magao were themselves the equivalent of classical figures, their rebirth in modern form.

The "Isako Portrait" suggests one type of text-image relationship, with the material form of prints taking on the qualities of the poetry in its shape (courtly *shikishi*), color (bright, but restrained, muted to avoid gaudiness), subject (tinged with classicism) and message (the conjoining of elegant past and present worlds). A second aspect of this relationship was the signification process itself, wherein text and image conjoined in their individual elements to create an interpenetrating language. In this latter respect, it was Magao's more complicated, layered verses that served as the model for the intricate interaction of these two mediums in Edo *kyōka* surimono. Early *kyōka*, as I have described it, typically relied on layers of meaning for its effects, but in this aspect too, as in classicism, Magao took this tendency to its extreme. Complexity, in fact, was a major part of Magao's poetics from early in his own career, as seen to a limited extent in the first "snow" poem above, with its four points of

⁶⁷⁷ The woman's obi, tied in front, identifies her as a high ranking courtesan, and the girl thus her *kamuro*. A small *ukifune* scene (which involved Prince Kaoru) on the heater adds a hint of romance. In this case, the *tanzaku* on a tray, carried in by the *kamuro*, is clearly to be inscribed for a lover.

⁶⁷⁸ 1984, 136. I find this unlikely, following my analysis in the previous note. But the association need not be literal to hold.

overlapping meaning. But it was a variant of this typical *kyōka* layering in which Magao specialized, bringing together not merely conceptual realities through puns, but iconic references to the classical past. Interestingly, in Nanpo and Kisshū's selections for their initial *kyōka* anthologies, both singled out yet another Magao "snow" verse of this latter sort, which appeared in different variants in each book. Nanpo's *Manzai kyōkashū* chose the more straightforward version of this poem:

<i>Minazuki no</i>	Although not the snow
<i>Yuki niwa arade</i>	Of the waterless month
<i>Kisaragi no</i>	He disappeared with
<i>Mochi ni kietaru</i>	The second month's full moon
<i>Fujimi Saigyō</i>	Saigyō, gazing at Fuji ⁶⁷⁹

It is noteworthy that Kisshū, in his selections for *Kyōka Wakanashū*, preferred the verse in a more complex version:

<i>Minazuki no</i>	Unable to wait for
<i>Mochi womo matade</i>	The sixth month's full moon
<i>Kisaragi no</i>	He disappeared in
<i>Kieshiya yuki no</i>	The second month
<i>Fujimi Saigyō</i>	Saigyō, gazing at snowy Fuji

This poem, which in either version relies entirely on references to two classical *waka*, combined with an iconographic image from painting, is emblematic of Magao's unique *kyōka* style, forcing together multiple elements from diverse sources to make a single whole, a procedure typical of nineteenth century surimono. Here, the reference is first to a *tanka* envoy in a longer poem in the *Manyōshū* (万葉集), which states that the snow gathered on Fuji's peak melts completely at last by the full moon of the sixth month, but snow begins falling again that very night.⁶⁸⁰ The second reference is to Priest Saigyō's parting *waka*, affirming his desire to die at the height of spring, around

⁶⁷⁹ みな月の雪にはあらできさらぎのもちに消えたる富士見西行. Nihon koten bungaku zenshū, vol. 47, 534, no.288.

⁶⁸⁰ *Fuji no ne ni / Furioku yuki wa / Minazuki no / Mochi ni kenureba / Sono yo furikeri* (On the peak of Mt. Fuji / The accumulated fallen snow / Disappears entirely / By the full moon of the sixth month / Then falls again that night; III: 323)

the full moon of the second month.⁶⁸¹ The final line, meanwhile, could be the title of any number of paintings, including a print we have seen from the *Azumaburi kyōka bunko*, depicting Saigyō looking back at Mt. Fuji (see figure 24). The result is an associative loop that takes the astute reader from Saigyō to Fuji, Fuji to *Manyōshū* poem, *Manyōshū* poem back to Saigyō through mid-month “disappearances,” in essence impressing the reader with the *flow* of meaning, rather than any concrete meaning itself. The combination poem, this is to say, does not actually have anything in particular to *express*, but creates an elegant atmosphere of literary allusion, and so serves as a suitable “Memorial to Saigyō” (西行忌) as its head note—no doubt an explanatory after-thought—describes it. It is this sort of poetry, rather than simplified *haikaika*, which one most often finds on Magao’s surimono, directly relating to the complexity of their text-image relations.

Thus, although the plain expression of an emotional atmosphere dominates in one strand of Magao’s *haikaika*, his poetry also delights in making references, often difficult, to the forms of high culture simply for their own sake, resulting in a far more contrived, less natural kind of verse, stressing cleverness rather than feeling. One may note here a contradiction between what Magao practiced and what he preached: the associative mechanisms of his own verse—summoning up various elements of the classical tradition, sometimes quite obscure, and placing them in relationships to one another, sometimes quite tenuous—appear as the very opposite of the simplicity he taught in the provinces. But it is less the case that the rules Magao applied to himself were different from those for others, than that he attempted to stand out from the crowd by taking those very rules to their extreme, to heights that only he and a few others could manage. In other words, underlying what can be seen as the two

⁶⁸¹ *Negawaku wa / Hana no shita nite / Harushi nan / Sono kisaragi no / Mochizuki no koro.* (What I wish for / Is to be beneath the flowers / Dying in spring / Around the full moon / Of the second month; *Sankashū*.)

extremes of Magao's poetry is a single ethos, the veneration of tradition, which allows for both the pat statement of an emotional state in elegant language and an incredible complexity of allusions and wordplay, overruling any clear expression of feeling, both styles in keeping with the original variety of *haikaika*. Emulation of classical verse, especially in its unconventional version (*haikaika*), is thus the one rule that underlies both branches of Magao's poetry, and he sought to explore each type to its fullest extent, creating refinement with both simplicity and complication, in elegant statements of feeling and through learned, sometimes arcane references.

Nevertheless, one sometimes senses an element of intentional mystification in Magao's verses, as though they wished to stress by their very recondite nature that he was the master, not always easily followed or understood. A sample of this has been seen already in Magao's "aikei wo inoru" contribution for the sea horse surimono from the *Umazukushi* set, presented in the introduction, in which Magao relies on a local prayer formula as the basis of his verse. Figure 45 (浄妙山・"Jōmyō Mountain/Festival Float"), another Hokusai-illustrated surimono, c.1820, provides further example of Magao's delight in tenuous connections and obscure allusions. For this image of a festival float (*yamaboko*, or *yama* for short) presenting the warrior-priest Ichirai (一來法師) scrambling over the head of his comrade Jōmyō (浄妙法師) in tight battle quarters on the Uji Bridge (宇治橋), a scene taken from the Tales of the Heike (平家物語), Magao's verse was:

<i>Kesa haru no</i>	This morning
<i>Hito tabi kureba</i>	As spring arrives on its journey
<i>Tsutsuizutsu</i>	Mists rise and climb
<i>I no be ni kasumi</i>	Over the well curb
<i>Tachi noborikeri</i>	In the fields of Tsutsui ⁶⁸²

At first glance, spring imagery seems to be employed merely to get to the phrase *tachinoborikeri* ("climb up completely"), which describes Ichirai's momentary

⁶⁸² 今朝春のひとたひ来れは筒井筒みのへに霞立のほりけり。



Figure 45: *The Jōmyō Float (or Jōmyō Mountain)* 浄妙山. A *shikishi-ban* surimono for the New Year of 1820, with *kyōka* verses by Mizunoya Tanigaki Makiyo, Jushitsu Morozane and Yomo no Magao, and illustration by Katsushika Hokusai.

position on Jōmyō's head. But the reference to the well frame (*izutsu*), which brings in Part 23 of *Ise monogatari* and a celebrated *nō* play of the same name, seems entirely out of place. *Izutsu*, which relates the deep bonds of love shared by a young couple that met and played in childhood beside a well frame, represents a signifying element thematically at the opposite extreme from the hardened monk-warriors of *Heike*. The print is not asking us to view the relationship between the warriors on the same terms as the lovers from *Ise monogatari*, instead relying on circumstantial, rather than core similarities to draw a connection between them. One of the young lovers' first exchanges of verse, for example, describes their heights, measured on the well frame, and how tall they have since grown, a possible, albeit distant, reference to the towering warriors on the bridge. It may also be that the wooden bridge itself is being compared to the well curb, the term *tsutsui* signifying any long, rounded object, hollow in the center. Moreover, as the monks come from Miidera (literally the "three well temple"), there is a semantic connection, however faint, as well. But only, in fact, if we recall that chapter four, part eleven of the *Heike* twice describes Jōmyō as coming from Tsutsui, recognizing the embedded place name in the poem, does the reference seem more fully warranted for the scene presented.⁶⁸³

Magao's use of *Izutsu* as a source of allusions for the Battle of Uji Bridge points out several important aspects of his use of tradition, which relate directly to the utilization of iconic cultural elements in surimono. First, entirely unlike Nanpo's poems that allusively quoted classical verses but intentionally inverted their original meanings, in order to make ironic statements concerning his philosophy of contemporary life, Magao's use of canonical elements here has nothing whatsoever to

⁶⁸³ The name of Jōmyō's ally, Ichirai, is also cleverly embedded in the poem, through the odd phrasing "haru no hitotabi kureba" ("when spring's single journey comes"). Taking "hito" and "kuru" in the alternate readings of their characters (一, 来), we get "Ichirai". Magao, as one might expect, was also fond of palindrome poems and acrostics.

do with the original qualities of his sources, and the only message to be derived from his utilization of them is indirect. Specifically, it is the reference itself, the ability to make a learned allusion to a past structure, be it through pun, thematic link or overlap in circumstantial details that is of the essence, and the resulting message is thus not dependent on the nature of the source, but rather a superficial statement on the composer's cleverness in drawing together diverse materials. In short, Magao's utilization of canonical elements does not usually rely on his deep understanding of their essence and qualities, but only a knowledge of their details, and a quickness of mind to bring together widely disparate materials in this way, creating a network of connections between elements, past and present. One can see here something similar to *haikai's* *maekuzuke*, in which the opening lines presented contradictory factors ("it was so sad, but funny too...") that the participants competed in answering in the cleverest ways ("even while my father was dying, I couldn't stop farting.") In Magao's verses, however, it is the questions that are posed by the answers. What do Saigyō and the snow of Mt. Fuji have in common? Disappearing with the mid-month full moon. What is the relation between *Izutsu* and the Battle of Ujibashi? Jōmyō, the Miidera monk from Tsutsui. The key difference, however, is that the goal of Magao's cleverness is not to elicit laughter, but rather a kind of wonder at the brain-teasing diversity of the sources associatively brought together. There is pleasure on resolving the riddles presented, but ultimately the message of these works is not in the answer itself, but rather in the display of the cleverness and knowledge of the maker, and the corresponding qualities of the recipient who understands them, positing their oneness as equally adept minds. I will return to the social ramifications of these puzzle qualities of *surimono* later, in my discussion of their exchange.

The arcane, riddle-like characteristics of Magao's verses, as well as his overt classicism, set the standards for *surimono* in the nineteenth century, even in those

works produced by the club of his main rival for dominance of the *kyōka* world, the Gogawa of Yadoya Meshimori. This 1810s surimono from the Gogawa (Figure 46), with illustration by Totoya Hokkei 魚屋北溪(1780-1850) a prolific surimono designer, is more tightly focused in its sources than “*Jōmyō-yama*” above, but contains a similar concentration on the classical past and its links to the immediate present, with a number of its related elements drawn together to make a constellation of signification. For the image of an orange cloth pouch with crisscross designs, paper and irises lying before it, this verse:

<i>Kesa haru ni</i>	This morning it became spring
<i>Narihira-bishi no</i>	And “Narihira diamonds”
<i>Ima mekite</i>	Are all the rage
<i>Kumode ni sae mo</i>	Now even “spider’s legs” walkways
<i>Kasumu nodokesa</i>	Are covered in misty peacefulness ⁶⁸⁴

The *Narihira-bishi* was a diamond pattern for cloth, especially men’s kimono, and is seen here on the pouch for writing paper. The name derived partly from Section Nine of the *Ise monogatari*, in which the famous lover Narihira visits Yatsushashi (八橋・“Eight Bridges”), a place where a river branched into eight channels, each with a bridge with irises growing beneath. It was here that Narihira supposedly composed his famous “*kakitsubata*” (iris) acrostic, a scene taken as the source for the *nō* drama of this name. The Narihira diamond pattern, which suggested the masculine powers of this figure,⁶⁸⁵ also crisscrosses like the celebrated bridged walkways of this site, and is combined with an iris and poetry paper in the illustration to suggest this famous composition. Moreover, the eight bridges have been compared in poetry and prose to the spider’s eight legs, giving the *kumode* of the poem, which can also of itself mean bridge. Therefore the imagery here doubles, giving on the one hand an impression of

⁶⁸⁴ けさ春になり平菱の今めきてくもてにさへもかすむのとけさ一伊勢浜菰.

⁶⁸⁵ The diamond principle (male) was contrasted with the womb principle, and Narihira made the exemplar of masculinity.



Figure 46: *The Irises of Yatsushashi at Mikawa* (三河八橋杜若) from the series *Famous Products of the Various Provinces for the Go-Gawa* (五側諸国名物). A *shikishi-ban* surimono for a New Year, c.1810, with *kyōka* verse by Ise no Hamaguri and illustration by Totoya Hokkei.

the walkways above irises at Yatsubashi, shrouded in thick spring mists, and on the other of spindly legs covered with the soft, raised pattern of the cloth. The poem's central pivot word, *haru ni nari / narihira*, thus matches the temporal layering of the image. On the one hand, poem and image are immediately present—"becoming spring" and the popular diamond motif—on the other—"Narihira" the classical figure and the references to *Ise monogatari*—focused on the past. These levels are simultaneously present, neither wholly dominant over the other, as past ideal melds with present reality in a seamless form. In operation, therefore, there is not a substantial difference between surimono made by the Yomo Group and those of its rivals, who competed, in fact, with essentially the same kinds of poetry, classicism, and complex text-image combinations on their surimono.

The one point where we can draw a distinction, however, is in Magao's extreme looseness with his textual sources, skating freely across the surfaces of distinct canonical elements on the basis of their circumstantial connections, with little care, it would seem, for their actual content—except to the extent of seeking out similarities in peripherals that allow for easy linking. Once again, we can find examples of Magao's free use of the literary past even in fairly early works, such as his *Furuuta ni kuwaete tatematsureru nagauta* (古歌に加えて奉れる長唄・“A Long Song Made of an Accretion of Old Songs”), a lengthy *kyōbun* (狂文・“mad prose”) passage in one of Nanpo's last anthologies, published in fact after his withdrawal from the *kyōka* world, the *Kyōka saizōshū* (狂歌才蔵集) of 1787. This complex, comic work, which reads like many of Magao's later prefaces to his *kyōka* anthologies, moves through a half-dozen famous *mukashi-banashi* (fairy tales) with sudden shifts

in subject according to pivot words and repetitious sounds, while tying these stories to the modern *kyōka* world with puns.⁶⁸⁶ An excerpt reads:

Long, long ago, saying they were going out, the granddad went to the mountains, cutting wood, and grandma to the river, washing clothes and well, we've all read it, you get the drift...ing down the river, a peach, just as you'd expect, but if it passes on by, if you like, then I'll just turn it to fried rice, that's rice, traded for a persimmon seed, an eight year persimmon, and waiting all that while in silence, the crab, just watching, and the monkey, with his ass red, like Akara [Nanpo], withdrawn from the world to his sad Uji hut, where the tongue-cut sparrow cries "Cho-cho-" and if you go and visit this place of comic verse, keep it dark that we all know the light's still on, wouldn't that be plummy, hanging high on a branch in a warbler's low garden....⁶⁸⁷

Magao's almost untranslatable, stream-of-consciousness weave of classic stories and subtle references to contemporary people and events undoes conventional logic, as a good "*kyō-*" work should. But far more than even the familiar *kyōka* madness, Magao takes a cavalier attitude towards tradition, blending the different elements of stories with no regard for content, merely pivoting from one tale to the next, onto the contemporary world and back again, through related sounds and bridge words. The superficial aspects of language—sound, rather than sense—come to the fore here, while the weaving effect makes a singular entity out of the familiar past, mashing up tired stories into fragments, frustrating their narrative arc with stops, brute transitions and imagined inertia (the missed opportunity of the peach that merely floats by, rather than being stopped so that the story can go on). It is as though the traditions are

⁶⁸⁶ The thick puns of this "song" resemble those of the subsequent *kokkeibon* genre, which was to rise to prominence in the nineteenth century. A similarly dense passage, from Shikitei Sanba's "Bathhouse of the Floating World" was given as an example of the difficulties of *gesaku* translation by James Araki, in his "Problems of Genre and Translation: Sharebon and Kokkeibon" in *Studies on Japanese Culture II* (The Japan P.E.N. Club, 1973), 392-3.

⁶⁸⁷ *Edo kyōkabon senshū* 江戸狂歌本選集 Vol. 1. Tokyo: Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 1998. I have taken many liberties in translating this passage, in order to put some of the puns, wordplay and repetition into English. For example, the last part here suggesting that Nanpo is still active in *kyōka* reads "*zareuta no aru tokoro niwa ari no koto nai tokoro [naisho] niwa nashi no koto takaki eda ni...*" or more literally "where there's comic verse, there's comic verse; where there's not, there's not." I have attempted to recreate the oppositions of *aru tokoro/nai tokoro (naisho)* with light and dark, while substituting "plum" for *nashi* ("pear"/"not") to suggest the abrupt transition here through pun.

burdensome, the stories old, as though there were no more point in the original narratives themselves, only in cleverly blending them together into a streaming unity, which flows into present reality as well.⁶⁸⁸ Magao's use of tradition here, in short, is structurally similar but functionally quite different from that of his mature reverence for the classical. What changed his attitude, tone and approach?

Before turning to focus on this question, let me contrast *Furuuta ni kuwaete tatematsureru nagauta* to one of Magao's later surimono, which also includes a fairy tale reference, to highlight the nature of this difference. This work (Figure 47) is one of the Genroku Poetry Shells (元禄歌仙貝合), a set of 36 surimono Magao and his associate Shūchōdō Monoyana 秋長堂物築 (1761-1831?) helped to design for the Yomo club with Hokusai. The shell for this print is the *suzumegai* (雀貝・“sparrow shell”). *Suzume* suggests the folktale *Shita-kiri suzume* (舌切雀・“Tongue-Cut Sparrow”) mentioned briefly in relation to Nanpo in the above *kyōbun*, in which an old man who finds the wounded sparrow, hiding in a forest, is rewarded with treasures. Treasures, in turn, point at a New Year theme, the *Takarabune*, or “treasure ship” of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune (*shichifukujin*). Seven, for Magao, then brings up the herbs of the New Year, resulting in this verse:

<i>Nanakusa no</i>	The seven herbs'
<i>Takara wa sorou</i>	Treasures are gathered
<i>Tsuzura mono</i>	In this wicker basket
<i>Suzume-gakure</i>	With a sparrow hidden
<i>Nazuna tazunete</i>	In the flourishing shepherd's purse ⁶⁸⁹

Tsuzuramono, moreover, can refer either to a wicker box as shown in the image, or to the birdcage that appears beside it, again linking these two elements, the sparrow and

⁶⁸⁸ I believe that Magao's verse is a coded protest against political transformations at the start of the Matsudaira Sadanobu era, and its anarchistic tone a loss of faith in the conventional order of the world. The crab, for example, the conservative antagonist of the red-assed monkey (Nanpo), likely represents Sadanobu himself.

⁶⁸⁹ 七くさの宝は揃ふつゞらもの雀隠れの薺たつねて。Shepherd's purse (*nazuna*) is one of the seven herbs.



Figure 47: *The Sparrow Shell* (雀貝) from *The Shell Matching Game of the Genroku Era* (元禄歌仙貝合). A *shikishi-ban* surimono for the New Year of 1821, with *kyōka* verses by Gurendō Kakakubo and Yomo no Magao and illustration by Katsushika Hokusai.

the box of treasures it provides in the tale. The illustration, additionally, depicts not the seven herbs, but rather the treasures of the Seven Gods, including the *kakuregasa* and *kakuremino*, or the hat and cape of “hiding,” or invisibility, connecting back to the poem and tale. Finally, *suzume-gakure* is a set expression meaning that the grasses have grown high enough to hide the sparrows, implying spring abundance. In sum, we have a series of links originating from a suggestively shaped shell that summons up a bird, its use in a story and the other elements of that story, in relation to the current moment, the New Year, and perhaps even, through reference to a local product, the place of origin of the first poet, who paid for the work.⁶⁹⁰ But here, quite unlike Magao’s *Nagauta*, the content of the tale and seasonal lore, though freely utilized and associatively recontextualized, comprise the source of interest and meaning. This work is no less a weave than *Nagauta*, but far from the jaded “we’re all familiar with this” gestures of the latter, here the magic of the original story is recreated in a warm and adoring manner, and made the very substance of the piece. The past, in short, is not just random material that allows for clever connections, but the very coordinates of meaning for the present.

Magao’s approach to the past, his idealization of the classical that is exemplified on the one hand in his attempt to redefine *kyōka* as *haikaika*, a form continuous with the deep past, and on the other in the material of his verses and surimono, owes much in fact to movements in intellectual history in the eighteenth century, particularly the *kokugaku* movement. From its very origins in the school of the *kokugaku* scholar Uchiyama Gatei, Edo *kyōka* had sustained close relations with this philological movement, which had begun as a project to read and interpret the language of ancient texts and resulted in a complex philosophy regarding the nature of

⁶⁹⁰ The first poem makes a point of emphasizing “Yoshino tsuzura” as a “souvenir product.” References to local products are common in surimono, and seem to hint at the place of origin of one of the poets.

the past and the true identity of something called Japan. A number of *kyōka* poets, most notably Meshimori, but also Shinratei Manzō I, were *kokugaku* scholars themselves, while among surimono illustrators, Hokusai almost certainly had close *kokugaku* connections,⁶⁹¹ and the *kokugaku*-trained Shunman actually made a pilgrimage to visit Motoori Norinaga, designing a print based on his experience with a foreword from none other than Magao.⁶⁹² More generally, the *kyōka* surimono movement as a whole owed a great deal to the studies of *kokugaku* scholars, without whom certain early works such as the *Kojiki* or *Manyōshū* would not have been legible, and others, such as the various *monogatari* employed as the themes of surimono sets, not valued as serious literary works. The speed with which these studies were put to use in *kyōka* and surimono, moreover, suggests how avidly they were read and utilized as cutting edge material. In the competition to be novel and appear learned, created by and played out in the surimono exchanges, therefore, *kokugaku* studies were an essential source for *kyōka* poets and surimono commissioners, as seen directly, for example, in the surimono series “The Staircase of Words,” based on a *kokugaku* study, and indirectly in the expanding material used as the seeds for surimono’s associative links. But far more than any of this, the key role of *kokugaku* studies for surimono was an attitude, a belief in the deep past as the repository of sacred truth, and a recognition of the value of poetic composition in coming in touch with the mind of the ancients. Surimono commissioners and *kyōka*

⁶⁹¹ In an unpublished paper, I have explored connections between Hokusai’s series “Thirty-Six Views of Mt. Fuji,” which depicts all manner of commoners laboring in the shadow of the sacred mountain, and the thought of Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843). Hokusai, who roomed for a period with Kyokutei Bakin (1767-1848), had access to some of the leading minds of his day. The common assumption that there is little connection between elite, philosophical culture and that of a popular movement like *ukiyo-e* requires deeper inspection.

⁶⁹² Shunman, whose father was an amateur *kokugakusha*, studied from his youth under Katori Nabiko (1723-1782), himself considered one of the “four heavenly guardians” (*shitenno*) of the leading *kokugakusha* of the age, Kamo Mabuchi. Katori wrote the book *Kogentei* (“Staircase of Ancient Words”) that was later used as the basis for a surimono series. Shunman visited Motoori in Ise in 1796, exchanging poetry and ideas with him.

poets may not have carried out *kokugaku* philosophy in its pure form, so cannot be subsumed under it, but the influence of *kokugaku*'s approach to the past, often carried out through poetry, was deep. And here, we will see, it was Magao who most directly incorporated *kokugaku* philosophy into the *kyōka* movement, transforming it and the practice of surimono with it, precisely by connecting it to the deep past. Seeing surimono through the lenses of the *kokugaku* movement, we can view this practice in an entirely different way, as an attempt to put *kokugaku* ideals into living form.

The Kokugaku Connection: Magao and Motoori Norinaga's Poetic Theories

Kokugaku, native or national studies, operated in conjunction with the employment of woodblock printing as a commercial practice to systematically transform the distribution of literary knowledge in the Tokugawa Period, expanding and democratizing information about classic Japanese texts.⁶⁹³ The *kokugaku* movement began in the seventeenth century, with a radical critique of the secret transmission, which had structured knowledge of literature from medieval times, largely on a familial basis, as particular groups at court attempted to jealously guard and preserve their claim to the elite. Scholars like Keichū 契沖 (1640-1701), seeing the weakness of the transmission system, which not only limited the flow of essential knowledge but in fact tended towards arbitrary readings and interpretations, often

⁶⁹³ My discussion of *kokugaku* here, with special attention to Motoori's poetics, draws from the following sources: Mark McNally's *Proving the Way: Conflict and Practice in the History of Japanese Nativism* (Harvard University, 2005), H.D. Harootunian's *Things Seen and Unseen: Discourse and Ideology in Tokugawa Nativism* (University of Chicago Press, 1988), Takahashi Toshikazu's *Motoori Norinaga no kagaku* (Osaka: Izumi Shoin, 1996), the fourth chapter of Tomiko Yoda's *Gender And National Literature: Heian Texts and Constructions of Japanese Modernity* (Duke University Press, 2004), Naoki Sakai's introduction to *Kojiki-den* (Cornell University Press, 1997), and his *Voices of the Past: The Status of Language in Eighteenth Century Japanese Discourse* (Cornell University Press, 1991). Close focus is given in this section to Motoori's *Uiyamabumi*, translated in Sey Nishimura's "First Steps into the Mountains: Motoori Norinaga's *Uiyamabumi*" (*Monumenta Nipponica*: Volume 42, Number 4, Winter 1987), 449-493, the original text viewed in *Motoori Norinaga zenshū* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1968-1993).

arcane and nonsensical, developed a philological mode of textual interpretation, not relying on authority and tradition as the basis for understanding but rather directly examining primary sources in conjunction with one another to recover their original meanings. Of course, a project like Keichū's demanded the availability of classic texts, while his own studies took on broad importance by being reproduced in woodblock form, suggesting the intricate involvement of *kokugaku* studies with developments in printing, which served as the main means outside of direct teaching to propagate knowledge. With a new methodology for textual interpretation, a different set of texts became the focus of interest, not only the monuments of court culture at its height (*Kokinshū*, *Ise*, *Genji*) but also earlier works, largely overlooked because they were in scripts difficult to read, primarily at first the *Manyōshū*, later the *Kojiki*, but also *norito* (prayers) and other more 'primitive' texts. Careful study of the ancient past with Keichū became veneration and prescribed emulation of this past with Kamo Mabuchi 加茂馬渕 (1697-1769), onto which was added a rejection of "later" Chinese rationalist influence with Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730-1801) and finally a fervent, quasi-religious nationalism with Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤 (1776-1843), suggesting at least one path by which textual studies can become political activism.

For the *kyōka* surimono movement, the most important aspects of *kokugaku* studies were its veneration of the ancient—the idealization of the deep past as a sacred source of meaning—and its textual explications, which made available new material, employed as surimono's sources for series themes, print titles and internal references. Through *kokugaku*, classical works thus became not only better known, but also assumed greater significance as coordinate principles for guiding contemporary life, an aspect I will discuss in more detail below. Thus surimono, both individually and in sets, came to revolve largely around such classical works, connecting both their

general themes, and specific lines and materials to the present world. Surimono series of this sort include “Monogatari awase,” “Monogatari jūban,” “Ise monogatari,” “Torikaebaya monogatari,” “Uji shūi monogatari,” “Tosa nikki,” “Makura no sōshi,” “Tsuresuregusa,” “Nō jūgoban” and “Otogizōshi” among many others, covering an extensive range of early literature.⁶⁹⁴ Here, in sharp contrast to commercial *ukiyo-e*, which even when reflecting on the past took its primary interest from the twin pillars of urban popular culture, kabuki and the pleasure quarters, a straight, *kokugaku*-style reverence of literature and the classical work can be seen. The particular imprint of especially Motoori is apparent in surimono in its emphasis on *monogatari*, which, although never neglected, assumed new importance in Motoori’s teachings, as a repository of pure feeling (*mono no aware*) equivalent to poetry in its importance. More generally, the veneration of the past as the source of sacred meaning to guide and enlighten the present, to sort true from false and revive the original structure of feeling, can be seen to infiltrate virtually every aspect of nineteenth century *kyōka* surimono, which did not simply employ the past as an intellectual plaything, but persistently attempted to reconnect past to present, and so revive it. “Imbibing the National Learning inspired antiquarian spirit of the times,” as John Carpenter has put it,⁶⁹⁵ surimono in this manner put *kokugaku* teachings directly into material form and practice in the surimono exchanges, with classical themes and venerable objects presented in a courtly manner on prints whose very physical qualities, pale, faded lines and colors for example, gave an impression of antiquity.

This is by no means to imply that surimono was an exclusively *kokugaku*-style project, however, aimed only at revering or reviving a primitive, pure “Japanese” past.

⁶⁹⁴ 物語合, 物語十番, 伊勢物語, とりかえばや物語, 宇治拾遺物語, 土佐日記, 枕草紙, 徒然草, 能十五番, 御伽草子.

⁶⁹⁵ “Textures of the Antiquarian Imagination: Kubo Shunman and the *Kokugaku* Movement” in *The Commercial and Cultural Climate of Japanese Printmaking*, (Ed. Amy Reigle Newland). Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2004.

First, although the *kokugaku*-venerated *Manyōshū* was an important inspiration for many *kyōka/haikaika* poets, Magao included, the *Kokinshū* style of logical statement and poetic artifice was by far the more dominant model for these poets. Accordingly, it was far less the ancient past that surimono idealized than the later age of the high court, utilizing primarily *monogatari*, miscellanies like *Tsurezuregusa* and *Makura no sōshi*, and to a lesser extent *setsuwa* tales as its sources of reference, with fewer *Kojiki* or *Manyōshū* references, though these are by no means absent.⁶⁹⁶ Surimono's sources, as mentioned, went far beyond the courtly as well, including numerous references to warriors and works relating to them, and even early townsman culture as well.⁶⁹⁷ Most significantly, entirely unlike the eighteenth century *kokugaku* movement, surimono made little discrimination between "Japanese" and "Chinese" sources, freely employing both, often in combination, with no sense of conflict or taboo. Overtly Chinese figures, narratives, history and objects figured as the subjects of surimono with great frequency, also forming the basis for series, such as the 24 Paragons of Filial Piety, Three Heroes of *Shu*, or the Five Elements. To this extent, we can strongly assert that surimono was not fully aligned with *kokugaku* teachings and principles, even as we note the deep influence of *kokugaku* philosophy on many aspects of the form and its practice. This limited, selective influence implies that *kokugaku* itself was not directly the teaching that most surimono commissioners relied upon, but rather that aspects of *kokugaku* philosophy were received indirectly and incompletely by this group, through another source. The general "spirit of the times" may certainly have been one sphere of influence, but of more particular and immediate impact on many composers of *kyōka/haikaika* were the teachings of their master,

⁶⁹⁶ The use of simplified versions or manuals, rather than primary sources, to reference classical works in an easy manner was certainly common practice for some surimono contributors. But the range of references also shows some familiarity with even obscure works.

⁶⁹⁷ Warrior works include sets like "24 Generals," or "Eight Warrior Poets." Early townsman themes include "Otogizōshi" and "Genroku Poetry Shells," as well as pictorial references to early *ukiyo-e*.

Yomo no Magao, which incorporated a version of *kokugaku* thought in their basic principles and ideals, albeit in somewhat watered down fashion. The purity or authority of Magao's teachings in relation to *kokugaku* are of far less importance here though than the transfer of these principles to popular culture through the commissioners of surimono.

The importance of *kokugaku*'s idealization of the deep past as the site of sacredness and original, natural principles for the surimono movement is fairly self-evident, as is the connection between its idealization of the classics and *kyōka* surimono's concentration on the same. Therefore I would like to focus here on an unexplored area of *kokugaku* influence: the relation between Magao's assertion of *kyōka* as an ancient form in his promotion of "*haikaika*," and the poetic theories proposed by Motoori, looking particularly at his 1798 *Uiyamabumi* (宇比山踏・"First Strides Up the Mountain"). Magao, a broadly read man with intimate *kokugaku* connections,⁶⁹⁸ must certainly have encountered Motoori's ideas in one form or another, either directly or through an acquaintance. Therefore, he surely knew that Motoori stressed the composition of poetry as one way of communing with, learning and recreating the ideal, ancient past. In *Uiyamabumi*, for example, Motoori asserted that "all people should compose poetry,"⁶⁹⁹ explaining:

By composing one's own poetry and constantly reading *monogatari*, one comes to know the elegant style of the ancients. This is, of course, useful for learning poetry, but it is also very helpful for carrying out the scholarship that clarifies the ancient way.⁷⁰⁰

⁶⁹⁸ A number of Magao's many followers and associates, most notably Shūchōdō Monoyana, had associations with *kokugaku* masters.

⁶⁹⁹ My reading of *Uiyamabumi* is based on Sey Nishimura's "First Steps into the Mountains: Motoori Norinaga's *Uiyamabumi*" (Monumenta Nipponica: Volume 42, Number 4, Winter 1987), 449-493, backed up by the original text in *Motoori Norinaga zenshū* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1968-1993).

⁷⁰⁰ *Zenshū*, 630. My translation.

In contrast to Mabuchi, moreover, Motoori did not emphasize composition in the style of the *Manyōshū*, actually arguing that it was better for students to begin with the poetry of the “later age” (Heian) as their model, and work back. He criticized those who mixed vocabulary or simply threw a few ancient words into a poem as decoration, relying on a superficial idealization of the *Manyōshū*. Motoori in fact favored the *Kokinshū* as the model for his own poetry, describing it metaphorically as a robe dyed with many colors, versus the pure white robes of antiquity. “Recite *Kokinshū* morning and night,” Motoori advised his students, “and become thoroughly familiar with the range of poetry made after the movement of the capital to Kyōto.”⁷⁰¹ In asserting that all people can and should compose poetry, that elegance should be their goal, and that their initial model should be the *Kokinshū*, Motoori and Magao follow virtually identical lines in their basic propositions. But the relationship between Motoori’s theories and *surimono*, through Magao, goes deeper than this.

Fascinatingly in relation to the popular verse practices of *kyōka* or *haikai*, Motoori takes a liberal stance toward the composition of poetry on set themes in *Uiyamabumi*, arguing against those who see the creation of thematic poetry as artificial, necessarily leading to hackneyed poems, as the motivation for composition is not in immediately experienced emotion. Poetry, Motoori asserts in opposition to this view, has always been nothing other than “the art in which elegant words are put together in controlled syllables.”⁷⁰² Present day practices of thematic composition are therefore not decrepit, for all the way back to ancient times verses have been “deliberately composed in a decorative manner with the intention of creating fine poetry.”⁷⁰³ A poem is thus never a “direct statement of reality,”⁷⁰⁴ but always mediated

⁷⁰¹ Nishimura, 485-6

⁷⁰² Ibid, 481

⁷⁰³ Ibid

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid

consciously through language, even in the supposedly “plain style” of the *Manyōshū*, which in fact utilizes set epithets and other standard phrases whose form derives from the stock of elegant expressions, not immediate feeling. Although in earlier works, such as his *Genji Monogatari tama no ogushi* (玉の小櫛), Motoori had described poetry as a natural, spontaneous expression of emotions experienced in response to things (*mono no aware*), *Uiyamabumi* surprisingly downplays the importance of feeling in poetry composition:

I may further add that when people of the present age compose poetry in the ancient style of the *Manyōshū*, the poems do not express their true feelings but are merely a fictional product imitating *Manyōshū*. If you regard composing poems according to your true feelings of the present moment as the norm of poetry, then people of the present age might just as well compose secular songs to be sung in the streets and should refrain from imitating the style of the ancient people.⁷⁰⁵

This seeming contradiction in Motoori’s thought from *Tama no ogushi* to *Uiyamabumi* can be explained by his idealization of the world of the Heian court and the time of the *Genji*, and the different standard he applied to modern times. Whereas language once was the perfect medium for emotions, Motoori argued, purely embodying feeling, the influence of rational Chinese on the Japanese language has impaired it, making it no longer suitable for this purpose. It is for this reason that one must return to the elegant style of the past, the “pure” language of *waka*, devoid of Chinese terms, even if it is not the most familiar medium for expression, in order to experience and know true emotion in language through composition. Let me work at this apparent paradox a bit further, in order to undo it.

For Motoori, whose literary theory revolved around the very notion of *mono no aware*, emotion was necessarily the essence of poetry—but as we have seen in *Uiyamabumi*, this was not the originating emotion of the contemporary composer.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid, 482,

Instead, Motoori emphasizes in Saussurian manner that it is not expression but reception, not felt motivation but rather the effect on the listener—and significantly this includes the composer too—which is where the essence of poetry is located, implying that the form and words of a poem do not *carry* meaning and emotion, but in fact *produce* it. As Naoki Sakai describes, “feeling thus concretized was not a product or remnant of some prior psychological occurrence... [and] because it could repeat itself and was not confined to an event that could not be reproduced, it transcended historical time.”⁷⁰⁶ It is language in a particular form, in short, that is the conduit through which the past can be regained, and revived by those living in the present. By composing like the ancients, one could not only come to understand them, but even experience life as they did, reviving true feeling through proper emotional expression. It is on this basis that Motoori asserts poetic composition for everyone, as a means of deeply knowing and regaining the idealized past:

All people should know the elegant style. Those who do not know it do not know *mono no aware* and are heartless people. Such knowledge of the elegant style comes from composing poetry and reading *monogatari*.⁷⁰⁷

Literary language thus has a kind of magic, not merely conveying what already exists but creating a new reality, with transformational power. If utilized in the proper way, this language can undo time itself, returning composers to the thoughts and feelings of the ancients, and thereby altering contemporary reality. Moreover, for Motoori, even non-poetic forms like *monogatari*, if they shared the “elegant style,” had the same transformational potential, reviving true feeling and restoring classical balance between humans and their world through language. Poetry, ultimately, was thus a way of regaining and participating in the being of the ancient past, and making it come

⁷⁰⁶ (1991), 307

⁷⁰⁷ See Nishimura, 491

alive in the present, transforming it, in Harootunian's expression, into "a transcendental signified."⁷⁰⁸

Reviewing the development of Magao's classicism in his poetry and surimono, we have seen the increasing importance of elegance and traditional styles for him, moving through parody and loose usage of ancient models in the Tenmei Period to their idealization and utilization as the foundation of meaning in the Kasei. Moreover, at the base of nineteenth century *kyōka* surimono, unifying the various kinds of productions made in this form by various users, can be located a single mode of operation, tying the structure of the classical past onto the present, typically in a manner that melds them indistinguishably. Behind this seamless integration of past and present, I have argued, lay Magao's promotion of *kyōka* as *haikaika*, a classical form with a lineage deriving from the *Kokinshū*, which placed contemporary composers in an unbroken line of their fellows dating back to antiquity. Now, however, these ideas must be contextualized in relation to Motoori, as a *kokugaku*-style assertion of the importance of the classical past as the locus of meaning and true experience. Magao's prioritization of the forms of the past over those of the present, in this frame of reference, must be seen not just as "effete" postures of gentility, a pompous borrowing of the structures of high culture to show himself as a classy and cultivated man, as they are usually taken to be, but also in fact as an attempt to actualize the past within the present, taking Motoori's propositions quite literally as a basis for action in the world. Even Magao's more eccentric behaviors, donning courtier's robes and headgear at *kyōka* meetings late in his life, or only meeting with students with a standing screen between them, although preserving his special privileges and aura as the master, should, I believe, not merely be seen as putting on airs, but also as an attempt to bring the idealized past to life in the present world. It is

⁷⁰⁸ 1988, 97.

noteworthy in this regard that the “classical act” was not made Magao’s exclusive possession, but rather offered to students as the proper way of performing. Formal *kyōka* gatherings were based on classical *uta-awase*, surimono themselves on courtly poetry presentation sheets, and their content, poetic and pictorial, on canonized literature.

Before turning to an examination of the surimono exchange as it was practiced under Magao, I would like to focus on the preface he wrote for his first collection that appeared under the name *haikaika*, the *Haikaika kyōdai hyakushū* (俳諧歌兄弟百集) of 1814. Although much has been written about Magao’s poetics and teachings based on compositions by his students and himself, Magao never in fact wrote a comprehensive work of his ideas regarding poetry. In addition to surviving poems (and surimono), however, we can glimpse some of his poetic concepts indirectly through his difficult but often revealing prefaces, though this requires uncovering literal statements from beneath thick layers of wordplay and classical reference. For *Kyōdai hyakushū*, for example, Magao, not surprisingly in regard to his increasingly close relation to *kokugaku*, takes the *Manyōshū* as his theme, expressing his ideas on poetry through quotations taken from that text. Here is a relevant excerpt.⁷⁰⁹

In this world of ours, along the path of pleasure, it’s said getting drunk and weeping is fun.⁷¹⁰ But it’s clear by comparison there’s no form of play that can compare⁷¹¹ to the composition of poetry. By day, this Way flourishes, and by night, we speak of it as glowing all the more as a shining gem,⁷¹² a treasure beyond price.⁷¹³ *People who deepen their spirits through the practice of playful poetry*, in the four directions,⁷¹⁴

⁷⁰⁹ Quoted from *Edo kyōkaban senshū Vol. 9*. (Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 1998.)

⁷¹⁰ *Manyōshū* no.350. “Yo no naka no asobi no michi ni” is quoted directly, but “tanoshiki” (taken from *Manyōshū* no.351) is substituted for “suzushiki.” This, and the references immediately following come from thirteen poems in praise of sake by Lord Ōtomo of Dazaifu.

⁷¹¹ *Manyōshū* no.353. Magao borrows the last line “nao shikazukeri” (“without equal”) to reverse the original meaning, in a fashion typical of Nanpo. It is not “getting drunk and weeping” that is without equal, but poetry composition.

⁷¹² *Manyōshū* no.349, which says *yoru hikaru tama* (“gems that shine at night”) cannot compare to drinking and letting the heart fly free.

⁷¹³ *Manyōshū* no.348

⁷¹⁴ *Shihō* (“four directions”) here could also be read *yomo*, the name of Magao’s group.

in the eight directions, come together to perform, amazing people drawn to this ancient poetry, who desire only to be skillful.⁷¹⁵ *Feeling the style of ages past, they shed light on it*, vigorously rejecting the vulgar qualities of lampoons [*rakushu*]. Setting the moon-boat adrift on the sea of sky,⁷¹⁶ *they journey back through time to the origins of haikaika*, competing in monthly poetry readings.⁷¹⁷

世の中の遊びの道にたぬしきは。酔なきするにありといへど。
思ふどちよりて歌しぬびするに猶しかずけりとやうたはまし。
そはいかにといはむに。日頃この道さかりにおこなはれて。価
なき宝夜ひかる玉といふとも豈まさらめやと。戯うたに心をふ
かむる人。四方八方に出奉つゝ。いにしへの歌にかしこき人た
ちも。ほりするものはわざこと也けりと。古き世の手ふり思ひ
あきらむるまゝに。落首体の拙きことをいとひ。天の海に月の
船うけて。俳諧歌のみなもとに遡らんと。月なみにきそひよめ
る中に。

In the passages I have highlighted, the direct debt of Magao to Motoori's poetic teachings can be clearly seen. Magao not only emphasizes *kyōka* as an ancient form of poetry (*inishie no uta*) but also, like Motoori, describes its composition as deepening the hearts of people (*zareuta ni kokoro wo fukamuru*). Moreover, this “deepening” is not merely a result of the thought process behind poetry, but specifically of a return to the style of past ages (*furuki yo no teburī*), that is felt, and through feeling itself, made apparent (*omoi akiramuru mama ni*). *Haikaika*, Magao claims, is a return to the style of past ages, rejecting the satirical aspects of *Tenmei kyōka*, and taking on grandeur and beauty accordingly. Magao's understanding of poetry, structured around a return to the ideal past that transforms its participants, bears too much in common with Motoori's to be merely coincidental. Indeed, the most significant distinction between Magao's propositions here and Motoori's in *Uiyamabumi* is Magao's stress on “*zareuta*” or “*haikaika*” rather than simply *waka*, yet his attempt to remove the caustic qualities from *kyōka* in fact make *haikaika* little more than a light variant of *waka*.

⁷¹⁵ *Manyōshū* no.343, which says the sages of old desired only wine.

⁷¹⁶ *Manyōshū* no.2227

⁷¹⁷ Magao plays with *tsuki-nami* (“monthly meetings”) and the imagery of the moon (*tsuki*) boat on the waves (*nami*) of sky.

In his *Kyōdai hyakushū* preface, Magao asserts that practitioners of *haikaika* “strive to go back in time to the origins of *haikaika*” (*haikaika no minamoto ni sakanoboran*) in their monthly meetings. In this statement, I believe, lies a key for understanding the nature of the nineteenth century surimono exchanges, and the fascination they held for their participants. For these meetings were not simply for trading beautiful and elaborate prints that showed off the qualities of their makers, but involved too an element of fantasy, as the recreation of a classical poetic exchange meeting, or *uta-awase*. Like Magao’s *haikaika*, they were an overlay of the structure of the idealized past onto present forms, giving contingent modern events a sense of significance, as well as a classical glow. In the surimono exchange, refigured in this manner, surimono commissioners became their image of classical courtiers, communicating with one another through poetry full of nuances, and presentation sheets rich in colors, metals and textures, as well as calligraphic and painting skills. In this sense, as the recreation of a particular impression of the courtly, strict adherence to the latter day structures of *kokugaku* was not important. Rather, all manner of learning and cultural elements, regardless of their temporal or geographic origins, were incorporated into the language of the surimono exchange, as a way of “playing courtier” and transforming the forms of contemporary reality to a meaningful form through an overlay of the past. These exchanges, I argue, although caught up in fantasy in this way, had very real and significant effects, raising the self-esteem of merchants, officially the lowest class in the Tokugawa social order, who through these exchanges could portray themselves as not only the inheritors of a classical tradition, but also its living embodiment, while creating a sense of oneness, solidarity and deep personal connections among them. The subculture of the surimono exchange, viewed through Bourdieauian cultural economics, thus provided its participants with cultural and symbolic capital that could be parlayed into “real world” benefits, while also

instituting a certain order for understanding the contemporary world through the lenses of the past, with broad reaching implications. With this assessment of the surimono exchange, not entirely visible outside of the context of Magao's *kokugaku*-influenced poetic theory, I wish to challenge conventional readings of surimono as merely superficially classical in content, taking a posture of learning in order to appropriate higher status, to see the exchange itself as a classical revival, intended as a rebirth of the idealized past in contemporary form.

Surimono in Action: The Dynamics of the Surimono Exchange

Surimono have conventionally been treated as art objects, whose value is purely aesthetic, and function decorative, implying that they can be understood in their context today, framed and lying flat on the wall, in the same manner that they were understood as objects of beauty in their own time. In this section I would like to examine the *kyōka* surimono in a different context however, as an item for use, an obligatory gift whose exchange was, perhaps for that very reason, made into a competition, and the basis for high theater. These competitions have their basis in the calendar print exchanges, at which individual commissioners would present their carefully worked out designs, with hidden symbols for large and small months, and the audience would attempt to decipher their content. As calendars grew in complexity in the 1780s and 90s, not only disguising numbers within designs by sequences or lines, but also in textual elements, including counts of the vertical and horizontal lines of a character or the presence or absence of a radical, quickness of mind became a two-way street, requiring recipients to use their wits to puzzle out the hidden marks. *Kyōka* surimono, as noted, borrowed these puzzle-like aspects from picture calendars, as well as the practice of their competitive exchange, but through its poetic idealization of the classical past, transformed content from a play with numbers to a poetry-image linking

game that utilized the various elements of language and traditional knowledge, taking all of the established facts of human civilization as the pool of material from which to build structures of association, typically connecting past and present. Deciphering a surimono thus required shared knowledge and understanding of how the game worked on the part of giver and receiver, resulting in the development of a special language of symbol, inference and text-image interaction in the private realm of play of the surimono exchanges. In the final sections of this chapter, I will look at some of the imaginative projections and interpersonal connections made possible by this space of play, saving a fuller analysis of the language of surimono and its implications for the next. For it is in their *use* that the full implications of the Magao classical revival for surimono and its participants become clear.

As I have touched on previously, there were two methods for the distribution of privately printed poetry sheets (surimono). Typically, the large format, *kaishi*-style surimono, which formed the basis of *haikai* works for most of the eighteenth century and *kyōka* works in their early development, was folded into an envelope and delivered by messenger. Smaller format, single planed works, on the other hand, could also be presented in person, and precisely because they were immediately perceived, often involved riddle-like content, which like their size derived in Edo primarily from picture calendars. This correspondence of format and usage reflects the particular potentials of each print type, from ease of handling and speed of apprehension to humility or grandeur, in relation to the requirements of each kind of communication, be it the demand for swift presentation and response in personal exchange or the unhurried apprehension of an extensive work in solitude. The person-to-person exchange, although more demanding on giver and receiver alike, for this very reason upped the ante of surimono practice, heightening both the level of competition and the intensity of personal interaction in giving and receiving. First, the

easy-to-handle and quick-to-perceive smaller format of surimono necessarily required a more layered, elaborate construction. An image of plum blossoms with a decorative verse on the same would indeed be a “greeting card” of the sort we are familiar with, a kind gesture but quickly dispatched with. As a mailed gift, such a work might be adequate, a symbolic expression of consideration for another, but in person it would not stimulate conversation or deeper interaction, not sufficiently reflect the giver and open up a space for his or her connection to the recipient. Prints with a built-in puzzle effect, however, be it in the complexities of poetry or the linking of verses with imagery, required the recipient to linger over the work, to try to capture the thought processes of the maker, and in this way to connect giver and receiver intimately. In the moment of insight, the “ah-hah!” flash of discovery, maker and recipient were mentally united, sharing the same understanding and code of references that allowed the print to be deciphered. It is this spirit of union that is the essence of the surimono exchange, and differentiates it from the mere gesture of solidarity in most mailed works.

An additional element that separates surimono exchanges from mailed works is their speed and intensity of presentation, the competition that necessarily resulted from works being viewed side by side or one after another leading to the development of the *kyōka* surimono’s broad compass, technical excellence and exploration of the associative uses of language, linguistic and pictorial. Unlike *haikai* surimono, which came to be sent out at varying times of the year, and for personal events as well, *kyōka* surimono were typically exchanged at the New Year, meaning a heightened concentration on these works in this season. In a one form of exchange, as introduced in Figure 3, members of a poetry club would gather simultaneously in various pairings or small groups, presenting each other with surimono and discussing their reactions to them. Likely, the object was for the recipient to puzzle out the content of the work by

him or herself, though a certain amount of explanation and hinting must have been part of the proceedings as well, as is apparent in the avid talking and pointing in the illustration—entitled *Surimono kōeki zu* (摺物交易図・“Picture of the Surimono Exchange”) and taken from an 1809 *kyōka* book.⁷¹⁸ After appreciating one another’s work, members would move on to the next exchange, and in this manner, one surimono would be compared to the next, and the next, and it is likely, given the penchant for such things, that winners or honorable mentions were ultimately announced, or at least opinions on given pieces publicly shared. Exchanges therefore meant direct competition, and making one’s work special, through a unique subject or device, unusual pictorial or printing effects, or complex content built through text-image integration, became essential in standing out from the pack. At the same time, the influence of experiencing many other surimono on the creation of one’s own meant the development of a kind of specialized surimono language, techniques that were repeated from work to work as a basis to build from. This combination of factors thus makes for the interplay of standardization and experiment that characterizes the surimono form as a whole. In the direct exchange, moreover, the giver could immediately judge the reaction of the recipient and experience in person whether a work was successful or not, too simple or too recondite, directing surimono compositions in certain directions.

Speaking generally, the symbolic system of surimono that developed through the exchanges, the specific text-image interactions of which will be explored in more detail in the next chapter, relied on casting nets between two poles, the present world on the one hand, both the standard imagery of spring and the New Year, as well as the

⁷¹⁸ The book was the *Yomo zaeuta nazukushi* (四方戯歌名尽・“Playful Poems for Every Name, from the Yomo Group”) of 1809, which was edited by Magao himself. An original copy of the work is located in the National Diet Library, Tokyo. In addition to Suzuki, see also Bowie, 28, and Ozawa Hiromu in *Edogaku jiten*, 490. I have also quoted a late eighteenth century textual source, which comments on the attention given to surimono by its recipients, in my Introduction, note 19.

structures of familiar contemporary life, including sometimes the personal circumstances of the commissioner, and the vaunted past on the other, with less familiar elements of literary allusions, historical events and classical trivia and lore. The “game” of surimono was to introduce and bring together a variety of these elements, connecting one past entity to another, and these to a present concern, in as elaborate and subtle a manner as possible, utilizing both verses and illustrations to make playful doubles, unions, references and associations. This level of complexity was expected of *kyōka* surimono, and at its height in the eighteen-tens and twenties, as recipients became more adept at deciphering, yet more of an intimate language of nuance and allusion developed, allowing, intertextually and through expectation, for readings that might otherwise be considered non-standard. Surimono thus, at one level, provided a way for like-minded participants to come together and challenge one another in a chess match, where the pool of pieces was comprised of all the known elements of human civilization, selected and arranged in particular configurations on different works according to the ideas of the makers, which then had to be deciphered by the recipient. But the development of a private surimono language, based precisely on the interplay between past and present elements, also implied a kind of code, not only for reading the content of works, but also for understanding the very nature and meaning of the surimono exchange, and what its practice implied socially and politically. Here the theories of Magao, in their *kokugaku* context, provide the framework through which we can see the surimono movement, in action, as an attempt to revive the classical world in the present, with surimono’s commissioners and recipients as its enactors.

Figure 48, from the same 1809 *kyōka* book as Figure 3 above, is entitled *Yomiage no zu* (読上之図・“A Picture of a Formal Recitation”) and depicts the scene of the first poetry gathering of the New Year. Like a classical *uta-awase*, the poets are

divided into two teams of six, facing one another, with a pair of judges sitting behind a small writing desk at their head, and an audience watching from the other end. Comparison with the clothes and postures of the audience highlights just how stiffly dressed and formally posed the performing poets are, sitting *seiza* style in *haori-hakama*. Meanwhile, the arrangement in the alcove behind the judges has a scroll painting of Sugawara Michizane, patron of the literary arts, with an offering laid before him. Hanging to the right of the judges is also a banner or poster reading *dai: ume* (“Subject: Plum”), suggesting the theme for this round of composition, while the text describes the process of recitation, with poems written on *tanzaku* poetry cards, recited, and passed up to the judges for marking. There is absolutely nothing in this image or its explanation that suggests that comedy had anything to do with these proceedings. Rather, as is apparent from the image, which seems to have striven for factual reporting, the *kyōka hatsukai* attempted in every aspect to create an impression of elite, formal classicism, following the rules of courtly *uta-awase*. Notably, looking again at Figure 3, we can detect some of the same figures at the surimono exchange, including a leading poet in formal dress, but mostly members of the audience. The surimono exchange seems to have occurred then, at least in the case illustrated, just before the formal first meeting of the year, and included major poets as well as minor, some no doubt coming in from the provinces just for this occasion. Like *kyōka* publication, therefore, there was something of a dichotomy between those who performed publicly and those who published and exchanged their work privately, though also interaction between these groups in master-pupil relationships. But the surimono exchange, this sequence of images suggests, was an essential part of the proceedings at the first poetry meetings of the year, and involved both groups. And it was, moreover, a less formal proceeding, a realm of personal interaction and playfulness.

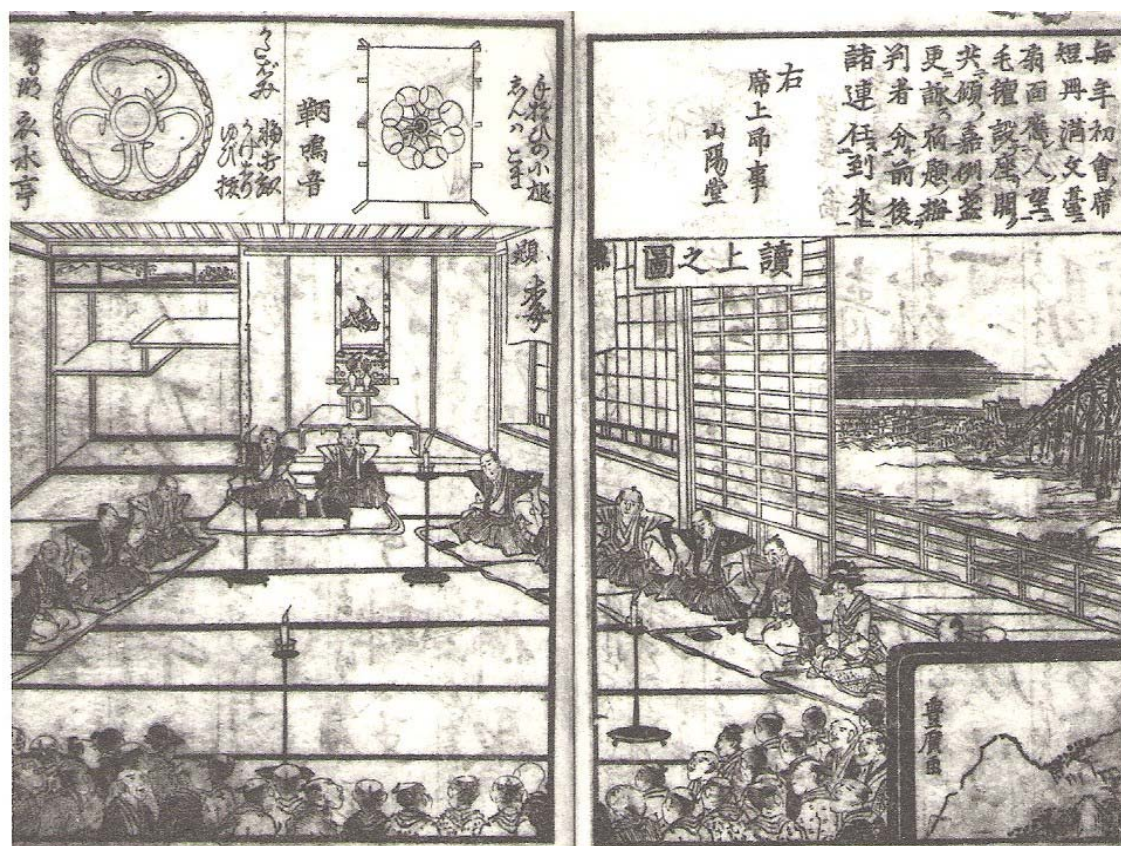


Figure 48: *A Picture of the Formal Recitation* (讀上之図). An illustration by Utagawa Toyohiro from Yomo Magao Ed., *Playful Poems for Every Name*, from the *Yomo Group* (四方戯歌名尽), 1809. National Diet Library, Tōkyō.

It has often been suggested that the process of *kyōka* surimono creation in many cases involved first reading at a poetry meeting, particularly the *saitanbiraki* borrowed from *haikai* practices, then the publication of the most successful verses later on surimono. Although the poetry on *kyōka* surimono often supports such a claim, with shared underlying themes, even though *dai* rarely appear, this pair of documentary illustrations suggests something of a different structure, with a limited group of elite performers at the *kyōka awase*, and a larger group of surimono commissioners. Of course the *Yomiage* image here represents a major *kyōka* event, the year's first reading, while *tsukinami kyōka* and the *saitanbiraki* (meetings to prepare poetry for New Year anthologies and surimono) were certainly more inclusive. Nevertheless, there does seem to be a clear dichotomy here between the commissioners of surimono and the famous poets, like Magao, hired to add verses to their works, so we should not assume that these poets were necessarily reading at the same meetings. Of yet more importance is the question of why the surimono exchange was required as a complement to *kyōka awase* at all, or, to put the matter another way, why the successful verses presented at these meetings were not sufficient of themselves, but required a material form like surimono to enhance or complete them. In this regard, I believe it is important to see that the formal nature of these meetings and their strict adherence to traditional *uta-awase* etiquette were intended to assert them as part of an unbroken continuation of classical poetic practice. The creation of surimono centered around these successful verses thus served to take the assertion of *kyōka* as a traditional form one step further, by taking the recitation—temporal, intangible, individual and so limited in scope—represented in the one image, and giving it the rich material body in the surimono represented in the other. In other words, mere recitation and formal practice, though powerful, were not of themselves sufficient to reverse time, to go upstream against its current. It is

noteworthy in this regard that Magao chose the volitional *sakanoboran* (“try to return”) rather than a plain *sakanoboru* (“return”) to describe *kyōka* meetings in his preface. But in the material form of surimono, more in fact could be accomplished than at a *kyōka* meeting. To explain this proposition, let me briefly describe the production and presentation of surimono.

By stating that recitation at a *kyōka* meeting was of reduced scope in comparison with surimono, I mean several things. First, the recitation was limited to the composer’s own composition and voice, and thus in temporal and geographic area, given material form only for the judges to see on the *tanzaku*. Certainly standout verses could be gathered and published in an anthology, and so preserved in this way, but this was no different from any of the other forms of contemporary verse, and did not assert the composer’s connections with the past, standing in an unbroken line of poetic composition going back at least to the *Kokinshū*, and perhaps even the *Manyōshū*. If surimono was different, it was so because it involved so many expert hands, which were for the most part invisible in the exchange itself, allowing the commissioner to take full credit for the content of the work. Surimono brought in not only other poets, with whom one’s poetry was complemented and improved by context and relationship with the surrounding verses, but also expert artists, craftspeople and additional minds, each of whom added a unique element to the finished work. The artist, of course, had the largest role next to the commissioning poets. How much of the final product was the artist’s input and how much directed by poets’ instructions is a tricky matter to determine, and probably varied from case to case, as I will discuss in the next chapter. Sometimes the illustration goes in a direction only faintly suggested by the verses, implying that the artist likely had more of a say, and sometimes the details of the poetry match the illustration so precisely that either it was produced under strict guidance or preceded the verses themselves. What

the block carvers and professional printers did to an artist's design, moreover, took it to another level of excellence. We may be tempted to think of their roles as unimaginative but skilled craftspeople, simply following an artist's line or instructions for color as closely as possible. In fact, however, both carvers and printers had a certain degree of freedom in the expressions they gave the final product, which should not be ignored. Finally, of greatest importance in relation to the impression of the surimono as an elegant, courtly object, a modern day version of the classical *shikishi* poetry card, was the professional calligrapher, who took the verses and gave them material form in elegant lines, typically summoning up courtly styles such as. These many hands, over a period of time, worked the form of surimono to a polished refinement that had the power to summon up the past and represent its commissioners as people of enormous talent.

This last fact was particularly so as the commissioners of surimono, as seen in Figure 3, presented surimono as a direct reflection of themselves, not of the advanced state of technical craftsmanship in society at large. The many "hands" that went into a surimono were subsumed in the single hand presenting the piece, the owner of which took full credit for its content. To some extent, this was accurate, as the commissioner did have the power to summon and command these experts to have them produce works of such quality, suggesting at least something about his or her economic status, and perhaps also the directing consciousness behind the orchestral work. But in essence, as I have described in Chapter Two, the commissioners of surimono relied on the parallel relationship of surimono to previous genres, such as poetic letters and presentation sheets, playing up these connections in surimono's very form to borrow their cultural significance and ingrained means of interpretation, developed in relation to an earlier stage of technology (handwriting). By this overlap, all aspects of surimono could be taken as deriving from the giver, calligraphy as a reflection of

personal discipline and quality, painting as personal style, and the lines, colors and appearance of precious metals as signs of refinement, taste and wealth. Although the names of artists and leading poets did appear on these works, moreover, as hired fame, these additions in fact did not take away from the commissioners, but instead actually added to their prestige, through their relation to celebrated figures in society, again demonstrating how influential and well-connected they were. By exchanging these works, in a spirit of competitive play that allowed for the free application of fantasy, surimono's commissioners became their own idealized impression of the classical courtier, talented people with richness, sensitivity, intelligence and power. It is by this means that the verses contributed to poetry competitions became something entirely different when given material form in surimono, dressing these verses in the trappings of the past to transform them into the embodiments of classicism, and of the courtliness of their presenters.

Of course, from a conventional point of view, stressing authenticity, this was sheer masquerade, the commissioners of surimono responsible only for some of the poetry, and perhaps the concept of a given piece, as well as the money needed to create it. The “gold and silver dust” on these surimono, stressed in the description on *Surimono kōeki zu*, was actually zinc and brass,⁷¹⁹ the disciplined skills represented in these works belonging to others, and the “talented courtiers” themselves largely despised merchants whose business acumen, not personal talents, gave them the means to hire them. But in social action, truthful representation is not what is of importance; if facades are convincing, that of itself is sufficient to create results. Therefore, from the perspective of surimono in action, as an object of exchange in a realm of play outside of the “serious” structures of society, the impression created by these works as

⁷¹⁹ See John Fiorillo, Richard Hashimoto and Sarath Menon, “An Electronic Transmission Analysis of Metallic Particles In Nineteenth Century Japanese Woodblock Prints” in *Andon* 65, 5-17

a reflection of their givers had real power, both for the commissioners and recipients. This power, of course, did not directly extend outside of the surimono exchange, to those not involved with it; in the political realm, for example, merchants were still the lowest official class in Tokugawa society, their behavior and appearance proscribed, their position in the world hereditary, to be passed onto their children. But within the closed realm of the surimono exchange, these transactions were very real, and gave a significance, purpose and power to those involved that did ultimately transfer to some extent to their self-definitions, personal connections and group identifications in the world outside of their circles. The real results of the symbolic surimono exchanges were not only deeper solidarity and unity with one's fellows, but also the participants' belief in themselves as people of knowledge, talent and wisdom that extended beyond the exchanges. Once more, in this regard, the literati mode provided a model for the commissioners of surimono, as a historically founded expression of a person of ability whose potential was not recognized by the social system as it stood, only here now aligned with the idealization of the classical courtier. Surimono, skilful combinations of poetry, calligraphy and painting—the allied arts of the literati—comprised a representation of unutilized talent that posited its commissioners as courtly types fallen from power. And this masquerade was successful precisely because it was self-supporting, the actors also audience in the realm of play, giving credence to one another's realignments of past and present.

In this latter aspect, the theories of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu are helpful in clarifying the nature and significance of the surimono exchange. In his writings on literature and art, Bourdieu argues that the creator of a work can never be seen apart from the structure that authorizes and legitimizes his or her creation. He thus shifts focus away from a sole concentration on individuals to include the ideological conditions of production, particularly in terms of social relations. The result is a

balanced view that neither sees the work as determined, a mechanistic product of ideology, nor as the pure result of individual genius. Bourdieu captures these competing forces, the individual mind and the social conditions that surround and inform it, with two terms, the “field” and the “agent.” Society, Bourdieu correctly notes, can never be reduced to a coherent or unified concept, but is instead made up of a number of overlapping and even contradictory “fields,” each of which is organized as a site of competition for power and place in regard to a specific human ideal, be it financial, political, or intellectual, brute strength or artistic excellence. Each field has its own standards, systems of forces and internal structure, based on power relationships. Any given agent’s place within the field, this is to say, stands

in relation to the resources (capital) which are at stake in the field. These goods can be principally differentiated into four categories: economic capital, social capital (various kinds of valued relations with significant others), cultural capital (primarily legitimate knowledge of one kind or another) and symbolic capital (prestige and social honor.)⁷²⁰

Each field, moreover, can be further analyzed both micro and macroscopically. On the one hand, a field such as literature can be viewed according to the tastes and dispositions (Bourdieu calls this *habitus*) of readers, generally corresponding with one’s own class and group identification or aspirations, implying the connection, at least in the popular imagination, of particular literary genres with certain types of people.⁷²¹ On the other, each field has a relation to a master field, the field of power,

⁷²⁰ Language and Symbolic Power (Harvard University Press, 1991), 230-231.

⁷²¹ In my opinion, the characterization of *habitus* as an inbuilt, largely unconscious structure reflecting particular social classes that Bourdieu builds in Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986) is one of the weakest parts of his social theories. External habits of speech and dress may relate to one’s upbringing and socialization (which include gender and race as well as class), but may not necessarily relate to the internal values that are assumed to correspond with them. The expression of taste, for example, on which Bourdieu bases his empirical data, has more of a conscious, social dimension of self-definition than he allows for, and may not reflect actual likes and dislikes so much as those likes and dislikes perceived to be normative according to one’s social place. In other words, such values can be easily externalized, and do not necessarily represent internal, emotional appreciation, although they can certainly become them.

which determines its place and importance in society as a whole, that is to say, its position in regard to other fields. But the field of power, the hierarchy of values as it dominates at any given moment, has only an ambiguous relationship to the kinds of capital available in any given field. It may privilege poet over pornographer in some ways in the literary field, allowing larger amounts of symbolic capital to the former than the latter, but economic capital will be distributed according to very different rules. Moreover, within the particular subdivisions of a given field (among pornography publishers, writers and consumers for example) a completely separate set of values may hold, with even symbolic capital made available among a limited group.⁷²² Fields, in this manner, compete with other fields for place in society as a whole, attempting to parlay economic capital for symbolic, or vice-versa, in order to gain power and recognition.

With these basic principles of social relations in place, we can thus see surimono as not simply an isolated field, embedded in the larger fields of poetry and printmaking, if not literature and art, within which its commissioners competed for place, but also note that through these competitions and the kinds of capital they invested and created, the status of the movement as a whole, and its agents within it, were raised. First, whatever elements of make believe may have been involved in the presentation of a woodblock printed poetry sheet as a reflection of oneself, the gains to be made through these exchanges were very real. For all but the elites involved in this movement, the struggle was not directly for economic capital, but rather for symbolic and social gain, prestige and personal relationships achieved precisely through skillful displays of one's cultural and economic capital, in a particular relation of these forms

⁷²² In the literature, for example, which Bourdieu explores in The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field (Stanford University Press, 1996), one may vie directly for economic capital by writing popular fiction, or eschew this kind of capital for symbolic capital, in writing for a limited audience of elites. These kinds of capital are to some degree ultimately transferable, however. Symbolic capital can bring economic, as can social and cultural capital.

of power to those of the others involved. The ostentatious, “show-off” aspects of surimono were mediated by its structure as a gift, made for the pleasure of another, allowing for a pot-latch style display of extravagance, knowledge and wealth that was permissible precisely because it was posited as for another’s sake. Economic capital was in this manner transformed into symbolic and social capital, first through the prestige of creating a beautiful work, with no expense barred in elaborate printing and fine paper, and second, through the social relationships established, deepened or affirmed by giving this work to another. Cultural capital was also openly invested in these works, likewise creating respect for the knowledge and cleverness of the maker, while enhancing social relationships through the elaborate, private language employed, which posited giver and receiver as like minded beings, devotees of the same movement. Within the limited field of the surimono exchange, these were the “exchanges” of capital that occurred, with both displays of wealth in the surface qualities of the print and of knowledge and thoughtfulness in the complexity of the content transferred to admiration and deeper personal relationships.

In terms of the greater field of power, however, the investment of cultural capital was of far more importance than economic, for whereas money was not the basis for respect in the officially promulgated values of society as a whole, learning was. One might fawn on a wealthy merchant to gain something from him, but this did not equal true esteem. On the other hand, a merchant like Motoori Norinaga could parlay cultural capital into higher social standing and broader influence and power. Likewise, the true competition in the surimono exchanges ultimately derived from the internal complexity and originality of surimono’s signification processes, not greater and greater expressions of wealth. Although there are a few examples of outlandish ostentation, such as surimono with backgrounds entirely covered in gold (brass) shavings, in general, the level of decoration with elaborate effects gradually became

fixed, albeit at a fairly high level, far above the average commercial print, and the commissioners competed internally, within these standards, for unique content. Here, the nature of the materials employed and the connections drawn between them reveal the upwardly mobile emphasis of the surimono movement. Even clubs comprised of kabuki fans, who had surimono made of their favorite actors in role, were not entirely exceptional in this regard, for although the material could be considered low, belonging to the *habitus* of the urban commoner, their presentation of it, influenced by the main body of surimono, involved the same kind of past-present interactions, classical aura and gorgeous effects associated with surimono in general. All the more, however, was this the case in works with classical themes and still lives, which aimed at incorporating material typically associated with the elite classes, historically with courtiers, in the contemporary world with scholars, typically of the samurai class. Employment of the material of “high culture,” in short, had as its aim not only the representation of the predominantly merchant commissioners of surimono as a worthy, educated and talented class among themselves, but also an attempt to actually raise their standing in society at large thereby. Here the merchants’ positioning of themselves as classical courtiers in the surimono make-believe was of genuine importance in relation to their assumption of the structures of elitism. Indeed, the very use of this material implies that surimono commissioners had their eye on more than just entertainment and self-gratification, but desired a position in keeping with their knowledge and skill.

I would like to turn now to a deeper examination of the symbolic aspects of surimono prints, particularly still lives, in this regard, looking specifically at the pictorial content with which surimono commissioners competed for place, and the way in which this content may have been read, in regard to their aspirations for place in society. Here the virtual aspects of surimono and its return to the past through rich,

physical form will come to the fore as constituting the way in which these works could have been interpreted by their recipients, with political messages embedded in even innocuous looking works. Particularly, the relation of surimono to the growing movement of imperial restorationism, which was ultimately to direct the forces for change that led to the Meiji Restoration, needs to be examined here in light of the idealization of classical courtly culture and the play of being courtier in the surimono exchanges. This latter aspect will be foregrounded all the more by an examination of the content of surimono still lives, which I argue functioned as symbolic as well as actual gifts, according to their images. These political, social and imaginative aspects of surimono must also be seen in relation to the official status of merchants and the promulgated codes of dress, activity and behavior corresponding to their position. In sum, I will attempt to suggest in this section how the practice of surimono was subtly subversive, not only flaunting sumptuary laws directed at their commissioners, but also embodying messages that pointed the way toward the possibilities for a different, even utopian, sort of future. For the political messages in surimono were not openly antagonistic to government authority as earlier *gesaku* works had been, but rather utilized an imagination of an idealized world, in contrast to the reality all around, to highlight the distinction between the present realm and what was conceived of as possible.

The Utopian Vision: Surimono Still Life and the Opulent Symbols of Protest

No one who has viewed a broad selection of surimono can doubt that the literary and pictorial content of these works is idealized: light, witty, and upbeat, full of peace and optimism, with a tone that borders on the sacred in the sense of *Shintō* ritual: purity achieved through simplification, with crisp but flowing lines, bright natural colors, and a perfect, seemingly effortless, control of motion. Certainly there

are kabuki scenes showing violence and many where a menacing masculinity prevails, but these too are idealized versions or stills of stage activity and favorite actors, completely encapsulated in the fictitious nature of the stage world and so no threat to the viewer. Nevertheless, though I would argue that kabuki subjects are hardly less idealized than others, posed in equally perfected positions and lit by the same inner light, to some extent kabuki works must be bracketed from the current discussion, for their choice of material was largely imposed by the performances given around the New Year, and thus was not as free as in other areas of depiction, such as landscape, still life, genre scenes, or legends and myth. In these fields, the imagination of the artists was allowed to wander and recreate—not tied to the features of actors and the appearance of their activity on stage—and the direction of their creative minds is telling.⁷²³ This categorical distinction, in fact, points to a general rule: the less tied to physical, external events, places and persons a *surimono* is, the more likely it is to engage in idealization, particularly the fantasy of a bright, ordered and stable world. And no field was as open, I would argue, as still life, where the appearance, placement and relation between objects, indeed the very choice of the objects themselves, was not imposed by familiar narratives or settings, but allowed entirely free reign, limited only by the pictorial conventions of composition and perspective. Still life, moreover, was a nearly unexplored field in Japanese commercial printmaking, without the paths of established practice and rules of representation that had accrued on other pictorial genres. It is in still life, for these reasons, that the ultimate expressions of idealized

⁷²³ I am speaking here of course of pictorial, not literary, content. The poets who approached kabuki did so in much the same manner as they approached any other subject for poetry: seeking wit, mining phrases and words associated with the subject for links and puns, attempting to find parallels between actions and essences in the immediate subject and those in the store of classical material. The only thematic limit poets were under, other than an obligation to be witty, was the requirement to praise or exalt the theatrical subject, to please the fellow fans with whom the prints were exchanged. Other than this, there is no major distinction between the approaches of poets in the genres of *surimono*.

reality, surimono practitioners' visions of a more perfect world, can be most clearly perceived.⁷²⁴

The growth of the object from an element of a composition to its sole focus also suggests a shift in the way that objects themselves were perceived in the mid-Tokugawa Era. The importance of the *object* in the practice of surimono is ironically to some extent suggested already in the very name applied to this genre. Certainly a different connotation was intended in the original coining of the word, which combines the graphs for “rubbed/printed” with “object/thing,” and its eighteenth century application to poetry prints was for very different reasons, connected in part with the specific language and interests of *haikai* circles. But by the nineteenth century, an unforeseen, perhaps even unconscious, interpretation of the “suri-mono” label had arisen, with “mono”—and particularly those objects “rubbed” (polished/venerated)—becoming a central source for pictorial representation. The rationale for taking objects as central in surimono, as this label suggests, substantially

⁷²⁴ Before leaping ahead to a discussion of particular works and the generalizations that can be drawn from them, something must be said here about the problem of genre. For the very idea of “still life,” “*nature morte*,” “*still-stehende sache*” or any of the other terms that developed historically to label this genre as distinct in Europe, were lacking in the Japanese context, implying that no specific generic distinction was made between images of motionless objects and those of natural scenes or people. Applying the standard European definition of still life, as a pictorial representation of inanimate objects—as opposed to human subjects—typically arranged for compositional and/or symbolic effect in a domestic setting, we can see that such kinds of compositions did develop in Japanese painting, and became a major type of illustration in nineteenth century surimono, and subsequently for the opening pages of *gōkan* (合巻 • serial novels). Moreover, an analysis of the development of still life representation in relation to economic stages, particularly the growth of markets and the subsequent use of personal possessions as symbolic self-representation, finds correspondences among the various contexts in which still life grew to importance, be it Rome at its height of empire, Reformation Flanders, Ming China or Tokugawa Japan. Therefore, although the use of the term “still life” is both anachronistic and European-centered, there are grounds for using it to define a new subject of Japanese printmaking that emerged in the eighteenth century, even if this new subject did not immediately signify a different approach or genre to the Japanese makers and recipients. Indeed, it is possible to question whether arrangements of objects in still life surimono were any more symbolic or stable than arrangements of people in scenes of courtly rituals or elements in a landscape, so we must guard against importing the European idea of still life uncritically. But the question of choice, of the freedom of materials and their placement, is one area where still life does significantly differ from other generic types, and a number of *kyōka* surimono designers, particularly Shinsai, Hokkei and Hokusai, took full advantage of the new possibilities this branch of representation offered.

differs from those arrangements of fruit, cut flowers and game that dominate traditional European still life, in which the bounty of the human mastery of nature emerges as a constant underlying message. Though certain objects, such as books, carefully wrought vessels and utensils, potted plants and prepared foodstuffs are constants in both European painting and surimono, seeming to emphasize cultivation, the human hand on materials, as a greater rule, it is the rare, treasured or revered object that takes the spotlight on most Edo *kyōka* surimono. These may be purely natural objects, seashells, coral or rocks, chosen for their unusual color or shape and emphasizing the sensitivity of the viewer, or “worked” objects, from bonsai trees to wrought silver, that similarly suggest taste and refinement, but the objects presented are revered, not mere symbols of human mastery. A lush arrangement of cut flowers, dead game birds, or piled fruit such as those found in European still life would be entirely out of the question in surimono therefore. One may find a few cut flowers in a tasteful ikebana arrangement, rare, colorful birds in cages or a single piece of exotic fruit, but presented for the fine qualities of these objects, and in isolation, not the overwhelming grandeur of multiplicity. “Surimono” still lives, in this sense, become quite literally the “rubbing” (in worship or polishing care of printing) of “objects.”

The veneration of objects in surimono takes place not only through the selection of certain vaunted items as the focus of attention in the image, but also, and more importantly, in the care lavished on the printing of these items, with heavy use of embossing, metallic printing and overlays of *gofun* or mother of pearl to provide a rich, textured and glittering surface on the print. Such care and attention has led to two misunderstandings concerning surimono. The first is Jack Hillier’s claim that surimono still life designers chose items mainly for the possibilities of texture and contrast that they offered, with little interest in the nature of the objects and their

symbolic or representative functions otherwise.⁷²⁵ Although texture is certainly a concern of surimono designers, were it in fact the primary interest, a much wider variety of materials would appear in surimono still lives, with common, humble objects represented more frequently. At the other extreme, because the objects presented are in fact often rare and special, a number of writers have taken these works as an expression of pride in possessions, with the commissioner of a work showing off a prized acquisition by making it central in the work. Although this is a possible reading of some pieces, there is a great deal more happening historically in the concentration on objects than simple-minded bourgeois pride.⁷²⁶ This focus on “things” must be seen in the context of the fad for antiquarian objects, without doubt related to *kokugaku* studies, but also to the presentations of temple holdings that became an object of parody in the early *kyōka* movement (*takara awase*), and contemporary studies of “things” such as Santō Kyōden’s *Kottōshū* (骨董集 • “A Collection of Antiquarian Objects”). In this broader context, surimono still lives appear as part of a larger shift in Tokugawa intellectual life, in which the consciousness of objects for their historical and cultural significance reached its

⁷²⁵ Jack Hillier “Still Life in Surimono” in *A Sheaf of Japanese Papers* (Uithorn: Society for Japanese Arts, 1979)

⁷²⁶ Although all images in a sense “stop time” and encapsulate their subjects in an eternal moment, the method by which still life does this is different from most kinds of painting. Still life does not present a “slice of life,” with an implied sense of movement preceding the image or following it, but rather poses objects in an idealized way, precisely like a traditional European portrait, in order to emphasize and linger on their particular qualities. Still lives, it might thus be said, are “portraits” of objects, objects presented in an idealized way, held in time—or better yet, against time—and thereby “possessed” in a way that undoes the threat and ravages of time on all things. The curious irony of still lives of expensive and rare possessions, which are found in both the European and Japanese contexts, is that they not only show off the owner’s power and wealth, but also, in the sense of image, *double* it, adding an ideal version to the real, and the painting itself as yet another new possession. One can glory in one’s possessions, therefore, not only by being in direct contact with them, with all the risks that entails, but also by examining them safely in the stilled image, the shrine to one’s objects, where they could be arranged in an ideal way, grouped together in close proximity as they might not be in reality, as a pile of treasures. The image itself thus becomes the storehouse, where objects are not only gathered, but also held in time, pristine and unmovable. Thus here, in still life, is the fulfillment of a bourgeois fantasy, to have all of one’s treasured possessions in close proximity, and to have them removed from the vagaries and damages of time and death, the arch-enemies of the way of life that seeks fulfillment through economic security and comfort.

height, likely in relation to *kokugaku* explorations of the past and creation of the idea of a “Japanese essence.” As with human subjects, objects represented in surimono were in no way limited to a conception of what was “purely Japanese,” however, with rare items from throughout the world introduced, just as with Chinese legends, history and literature, so clearly the concentration on objects in surimono is larger than strict *kokugaku* concerns.

Beyond texture, personal pride of possession, historical interest and national definition, the worshipful approach to objects in surimono, I believe, represents something more, that I will refer to here as the surimono commissioners’ “utopian vision” of life. I use the word “utopian” here to underscore what I consider to be an ongoing political engagement in surimono, in contrast to the conventional view that sees the world of popular culture as drained of its political dimension after the Kansei Reforms attempted to snuff out political satire and anti-government lampoon. It is easy to assume that a form like Magao’s *haikaika* was an implicit surrender, a retreat to quietude and bourgeois niceties after the irreverent overturning of tradition in *Tenmei kyōka*, and surimono, with its pious approach to “high” culture and seemingly unrealistic idealism slips into this as well. But it is also easy to miss—given contemporary concerns for those who would stand up to oppression through radically different means—that the practice of surimono in the nineteenth century was itself to some degree a subversive activity, falling into the category of those luxuries forbidden to merchants, and more importantly, pointedly proclaiming commoners as the inheritors of courtly traditions. Sumptuary laws, which sought to regulate every aspect of merchants’ private lives, were designed precisely in order to keep their economic capital from being transferred to symbolic, thus giving them a higher status

in society. But of course, such laws were notoriously difficult to regulate.⁷²⁷ When the use of gold thread, rich silk and elaborate patterns were prohibited on merchant kimono, for example, merchants simply began to use these for their kimono linings, shown off when they wished to, and thus in fact highlighting their extravagance all the more through its superfluous placement. *Kyōka* surimono can be seen as a parallel, taking the ostentatious qualities prohibited from *ukiyo-e* in the Kansei Reforms underground, in limited edition works. For as privately printed and distributed prints, with little opportunity to be seen by anyone much outside the circle of the exchanges, surimono escaped the persecutions of commercial printmaking of the 1790s and early 1800s, thus becoming an outlet for what had been denied to it. This is yet another factor, going hand in hand with Magao's proclamations of elegance and classicism, which led to the rise of such ornate, intricate surimono from the first decade of the nineteenth century.

It is important to see in this regard, however, following Boudieu's ideas on the transferability of capital, that the showy, ostentatious aspects of popular prints were not their only characteristics distasteful to the Tokugawa Regime. Printing with metals had certainly been outlawed from commercial prints from the mid-1790s, as having a gorgeous quality out of keeping with the status of *ukiyo-e*'s audience. But gaudy extravagance was not in fact the quality singled out by Matsudaira Sadanobu as detestable in Japanese prints. Rather, in a 1787 writing describing everything he found troubling in present day popular practices, he singles out restrained works with limited coloring—the so-called *benigirai-e* 紅嫌絵—as noteworthy, with a striking elegance beyond their station.⁷²⁸ Although elegance was much harder to legislate than

⁷²⁷ See, for example, Donald Shively's classic study, "Sumptuary Regulation and Status in Early Tokugawa Japan" in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (1964-65), 123-164.

⁷²⁸ As Haruko Iwasaki has shown in her "Portrait of a Daimyō: Comical Fiction of Matsudaira Sadanobu," Sadanobu was a complex figure, who knew a great deal about the Edo pop culture scene and even at one point aspired to be a contributor to it, writing his own *gesaku*. After retirement, he

superficial effects, it is noteworthy that the most famous cases in the government persecution of popular culture involved men like Santō Kyōden and Kitagawa Utamaro, who were intimately involved with the *kyōka* movement from the late 1780s, and whose style took works for the masses to a higher level of quality, intelligence and formal excellence. Some prohibitions, such as the outlawing of the names of courtesans from commercial prints, seem to have been aimed directly at the public favorite Utamaro, whose eventual imprisonment sped the end of his life. From the first decade of the nineteenth century, in fact, *ukiyo-e* suffered a famous decline into rank commercialism, at just the time that surimono were rising as the exemplars of exquisite refinement, taste and intelligence in popular prints. It is in this regard that we can describe surimono in part as *ukiyo-e* gone underground, with expressions of both surface richness and internal elegance saved for private printing. And in this context, surprisingly, those characteristics of surimono that we might have seen as quietude or mere elitist posing take on definite political implications, even more than elegance in commercial prints, as they directly asserted this as a quality of its commissioners. Ironical as it sounds, in light of sumptuary laws and the official definition of the merchant class, refined taste itself could be a protest.

Moreover, these prints did not simply assert qualities that its commissioners were not supposed to have, such as intimate knowledge of the classical world, quickness of mind and a breadth of skills, but offered in fact a vision of a different kind of reality, of what could be possible if the ideals of surimono's commissioners were allowed free expression in the world. In this regard, the choice of the New Year as the time for the exchange of surimono seems not simply fortuitous, or only a result of the need to reestablish ties in the newborn world, but also served as a perfect

invited Ōta Nanpo to his home and commissioned a painting from Santō Kyōden, who he had once arrested.

backdrop for both the linking of past and present and the imagination of a different sort of future. It is important to recall here the kind of impossible wishes expressed on congratulatory New Year poetry in *Genji* and Part Seven of the *Kokinshū*, often showing appreciation for the recipient by entreating him or her to impossibly long life. For New Year's Day, marking a break with everything that has come before it, offers the potential to imagine an entirely different future, even one beyond the known laws of the world as it had existed. In this context, the auspicious symbols on surimono, those of strength and perseverance (pine and bamboo) long life (crane and tortoise) good living (fine food, drink and clothing) and wealth (jewels, money, precious metals), were of course conventional wishes for the coming year, but also the promise, in the fresh, hopeful air of the new, of what might lie ahead in a differently arranged utopia. This was of course pure fantasy, but as I have described, the structure of play in the surimono exchange allowed for the full engagement of such fantasies. In fact, surimono images, particularly still lives, with their penchant for rare, imported, deluxe or antique objects, can be seen not only as literal but also symbolic gifts. In this sense, surimono constitute a kind of private currency, promissory notes for an imagined future at the hands of its participants, when the exchange of such gifts might actually become possible. For the present day of surimono make-believe, however, they remain merely "virtual," the pretend play of being an aristocrat with unlimited resources, able to distribute actual treasures at the New Year, rather than simply printed images of them. Within this private realm of play, however, with the projection of the idealized past shadowing these flat forms with a third dimension of meaning, the participants of the surimono exchange could at least savor the significance of the objects summoned up by these paper gifts, and receive them with the warmth of their givers' intentions.

The particular fascination of *kyōka* surimono for rare, rich objects can be highlighted through comparison to *haikai* works, which also had a penchant for still life imagery, but focused on a very different type of subject. Still life, although not a part of commercial printmaking until the nineteenth century, did have an early place in private printing, particularly in relation to *haikai* productions. The nature of *haikai*, capturing a moment from life in poetry, often using ordinary objects to represent movements of feeling with indirect subtlety, was one influence in this regard, the use of still life in early Chinese prints, the basis for many eighteenth century Japanese experiments with woodblock techniques, another. But the subject matter for these *haikai* works, from early illustrations for *kubaribon* and surimono to late *ichimaizuri*, tended to be austere, at its brightest and most decorative taken from natural scenes, flowers or fruit, but when focused on human implements preferring the most ordinary and banal of materials.

Let me summon support for this analysis of *kyōka* works by looking more closely at some of the subject matter used on their still lives. As mentioned, these often included images of wealth, worldly comforts and the things associated with them, fine foodstuffs and cloths, deluxe writing kits and antique ink stones, rare animal skins and exotic imports, wallets, satchels and lacquer boxes, jewels, coins, bars of gold and silver, and treasure chests. Sometimes these objects had a connection to the zodiac animal of the year or the story that formed the seed of the print's concept, but often they seem to have been chosen for their own sake, enhancing the impression of richness given by the prints themselves. In this respect, the pictorial content of an image can be seen to function virtually, as though the presentation of a gift that contained an image of an object was identical to giving that object itself. An unusual surimono with a single poem by Magao and an unsigned illustration (possibly thus his own) provides an excellent example of the virtual gift (Figure 49). The image

here is of a *toshidama*, a ritual New Year gift of money, with a decorative burgundy wrapping, flecked with silver, holding the coins, five of which appear outside as well. The foreword, referring to an early Chinese mythological tale, written c.256-420, states: “regarding the heart and mind [*kokoro*] of the Heavenly Rooster in the peach tree, described in *Genchūki*...”⁷²⁹ The *kyōka* that follows reads:

<i>Higashi yori</i>	From the East
<i>Hana saki someshi</i>	These flowers bloom and take color:
<i>Tori koban</i>	Bird coins—
<i>Kore koso haru no</i>	They themselves
<i>Hikari narikere</i>	Are spring’s shining light ⁷³⁰

Magao here describes the gleam of money as parallel to the light of spring, moving the heart of the heavenly bird to cry out. This surimono thus functioned as a clever overlay between a common, contemporary concern for wealth and two classical images, one mythological and Chinese, the other a standard poetic motif, the light of New Year’s Day. It displayed economic capital both in actuality, in the rich printing effects, and virtually, in the subject matter, and cultural capital in summoning a fairly arcane source in connection with the zodiac sign of the year, devoting both to the gift, both real and symbolic of the surimono.

But the coins here, imprinted with an image of a bird, are of an unusual mint, corresponding to no known worldly authority. The poem also implies that they, like the sun, have come to fruition in the East, the location, of course, of Edo (東都・the “Eastern Capital”), though here, because they are not Tokugawa coins, most likely representing the pride of the city dwellers, the merchants who could make money bloom, rather than the power of the shogunate. For, like the mint of these spectral

⁷²⁹ *Genchūki* describes an enormous tree in the Peach Capital Mountains of the southeast, with 3000 *ri* between each of its branches, on which lives the Rooster of Heaven. When the first light of the new day strikes it, the Heavenly Rooster crows, causing roosters all throughout the land to follow. This surimono was likely made for a bird year, possibly 1813.

⁷³⁰ 東より花咲初し鶏小判これこそ春のひかりなりけれ.



Figure 49: "A New Year Gift of Money [Toshidama]." A *shikishi-ban* surimono for the New Year of 1812, with a *kyōka* verse by Yomo no Magao and an unsigned illustration.

coins, the surimono gift invoked another authority than the *bakufu*. Specifically, the rich images of surimono still lives embodied a code of values that were in stark contrast to the austerity and self-sacrifice promulgated by the government. Through these images, with their antique glow and connection to classical literature, the bourgeois values of merchants were not only represented without restraint, but also given credence by being aligned with the courtly virtues of ancient aristocrats. Identification with the courtly, in other words, provided for an enhanced view of the commissioners' own present, through an overlay of the structures of the idealized past, while also offering an alternative set of values, seen to be in perfect alignment with those of the surimono commissioners. If the shogunate stood for frugality and a warrior's code of severity, the court stood for wealth and its delightful possibilities. It is thus a nouveau riche sort of identification with the courtly that dominates on these prints, a fascination with the superficial trappings and glitter of court culture, more perhaps than deep engagement with its literature, and certainly more than with its realities. Surimono bear some relation in this regard to the so-called *Genji-e*, a subcategory of Japanese prints with titles and images based loosely on the Tale of Genji, which rose to great popularity, perhaps not coincidentally, in the latter days of the *kyōka* surimono movement.⁷³¹ These too were in general more interested in the furnishings, implements, dress and interior decorations imagined to have existed in classical times as in the story of *Genji* itself, which was often gladly sacrificed or

⁷³¹ See Eiko Kondo's "Inaka Genji" in *Essays for Jack Hillier* (London: Robert Sawyers, 1982) 78-94. *Genji-e*, which can in some ways be seen as a popular, commercial version of surimono's idealization of the past and classical literature, rose to great popularity in the 1830s and 40s, particularly in relation to the *gōkan* series *Nise Murasaki Inaka Genji*, which also introduced surimono-like still lives on their pages inside the covers. *Genji-e*, in fact, have a long history in commercial printmaking and can be found as early as the 1730s, but were only made sporadically until the so called "Genji Boom" of the Tempō Era. Strict government censorship of kabuki and courtesan prints from 1842 also stimulated this development. Although *Genji-e* were not directly prohibited, moreover, they had a subversive feel, due to the persecution of Tanehiko for *Nise Murasaki Inaka Genji*, which ultimately resulted in his death.

twisted to show a gorgeous, patterned interior, full of brocade, lacquer, silver and gold.

It is in this context, I believe, that we should understand the alignment of surimono and its commissioners with their projection of the imperial court and its values, a relationship that offered specific cultural capital to the makers of these pieces, but was not a direct, political statement of fealty to the actual imperial house, as it existed in the nineteenth century. Of course this is a fine line, drawing a distinction between an ideal of the classical court and the historical court of the time, but the difference is fairly easy to see when we assert that surimono's commissioners utilized classical references not to enhance the status of the court, but rather themselves. Lee Brusche Johnson's argument that there was an implicit bias towards the imperial house in surimono is certainly correct, but whether we can tie this directly to an imperial restorationist agenda, as Johnson attempts, is more questionable. The evidence he summons, such as the use of the conventional *waka* expressions *miyo* (御世・"the honorable reign") or *kimi ga yo* (君が代・"the imperial age") could as easily be applied to an argument showing how surimono commissioners were appropriating the idealized courtly past for their particular purposes. On the other hand, I do take objection to those who would argue that the arbitrariness of the current political arrangement was invisible to the class who commissioned surimono, that its members were completely embedded within Tokugawa ideology and could see no other possible organization of social life. We have a number of examples from *ukiyo-e* prints and the kabuki theater that suggest otherwise, both playing up the contingent circumstances that led to the rise of the Tokugawa House and even subtly expressing solidarity with the emperor. Moreover, both the content of surimono and the structure of their exchange suggest an alternate, even utopian vision of merchant life, with

radically different definitions for its practitioners than those officially assigned to them by society.

In sum, nineteenth century *kyōka* surimono, based on the ideal of *haikaika*, took a very different approach to the political situation than earlier *kyōka*, and also commercial woodblock prints. Here, direct antagonism was barred as unseemly, *rakushu* rejected within *haikaika* and even the subtle parodies made in *ukiyo-e* through history and literature for the most part absent. As surimono were privately made and distributed, they were in fact open to make more direct political statements and ignore restrictions placed on commercial prints. But, although sumptuary laws in regard to printing techniques were freely flaunted, surimono chose not engage in politics directly, either through attack of the current authority (the shogunate) or fealty to another (the imperial court). It is in this sense that the apolitical nature of these surimono has been emphasized. What I wish to bring to the fore here, however, is the manner in which the posited unity with an idealized past that is at the basis of *haikaika* was implicitly political, ultimately positioning the merchant class as the inheritors of a great courtly tradition, as people of taste, talent and intelligence, whose abilities had gone unrecognized. The brilliant complexity of nineteenth century *kyōka* surimono, like a literati painting, was itself a protest, certainly not likely to bring down the worldly order, but clearly rejecting it for another set of personal values. The identification with the courtly allowed a different value system, based on luxury rather than austerity, literature rather than moral philosophy to come to the fore, a merchant set of values, but framed and authorized as the ancient values of the imperial court. The political statement in surimono was thus not a direct rejection of the worldly order, the shogunate itself, but of the way in which contemporary life was viewed through its values. In place of these, a new vision of life was offered, a utopian view that saw the structures of modern life lit with the glow of an idealized past, with

images of wealth, order, peace and happiness. Nineteenth century *kyōka* surimono were ultimately a reinvention of the present world through connection with the organizing principles of the past, but also a wishful vision of what possibilities the future might hold. This imagination, rather than simply a palliative, provided the practitioners of surimono with a new way of viewing their world and themselves, in which rejection of the current order did not need to be directly stated, for it was apparent in the contrast with what the prints themselves offered.

Conclusion:

Kyōka surimono of the nineteenth century offer perhaps the most complex and far-reaching example of how poetry and its particular aesthetics shape the content, function and practice of the poetic presentation sheet. Within the context of Magao's teachings and their implications, particularly his representation of *kyōka* as an ancient form, and the subsequent utilization of the classical past as the organizing principles for the present, the surimono movement in nineteenth century Edo took on an entirely new meaning, substance and means of exchange. Surimono, far more than poetic anthologies or readings at *kyōka awase*, became the chosen means by which the idealized structures of the past could best be brought to life. The material form of surimono became an expression of courtliness, utilizing the *shikishi* format associated with the aristocracy, and filling it with bright, pure colors in the Yamato-e tradition, flecked with silver, gold and mother-of-pearl and textured with other substances and techniques, including extensive embossing. Court-style calligraphy conjoined with light *tanka*, in a more reverent tone than *kyōka*, and stately, balanced images to create an impression of order and mastery. Classical material became almost obligatory as either the subject matter of surimono or its ultimate reference, and the general technique of these poetry cards to meld together past and present structures according

to their points of correspondence in exactly the way Magao had melded *kyōka* to *haikaika*. In relation to these changes, the exchange of private gifts transformed from the simple “find the hidden numbers” or “recognize the allusion” riddle style of picture calendars to a more elaborate activity in relation to these poetry cards, where the commissioners of surimono and their recipients gathered together to puzzle out the layers of meaning embedded in a work, in this manner achieving a sense of solidarity and oneness of mind. These exchanges, in fact, cast the participants as talented, courtier-like people, who could recognize the subtlest of allusions and create works reflecting great richness and skill, presented as reflections of themselves. The social and symbolic capital thus garnered through these exchanges had political consequences, in redefining both the class of participants and their view of their own world, pointing the way toward an idealized future.

Conclusion:

The Glass Bead Game of Edo: The Structure of *Kyōka* Surimono, the Commodification of Culture and Concepts of Personal and Communal Identity

Introduction: The Storehouse of Signifiers

The bulk of this dissertation to this point has been a “just-so” story, elucidating the specific poetic practices of seasonal composition, inscription and ritual presentation that gave birth to surimono as a genre, then exploring in three distinct periods the stylistic and historical influences that shaped its form and content, always in keeping with the nature of its poetry. My aim throughout has been to call into question the conventional treatment of surimono as primarily pictorial greeting and announcement cards that comprise a subcategory of *ukiyo-e*, and to redefine the genre in the mode of the poetic presentation sheet, in which the nature of the poetry inscribed determines every aspect of its physical form. At the close of the previous chapter, however, I began an exploration of some of the larger implications of *kyōka* surimono as an object with ritual and symbolic value in the nineteenth century, looking at the surimono exchange as a kind of pot-latch giving contest in which merchants could transform their financial and cultural capital into social capital, playfully competing with one another for distinction. Their creative play also shaped out a unique space, distinct from the larger political realm, in which a better world could be envisioned and personalized/private forms of currency passed between them, allowing for new conceptualizations of relationships and possibilities for interpersonal connection. The question with these liminal spaces of play in the Tokugawa Era, however, has always been: are they merely cul-de-sacs of escapism, momentary refuge from an oppressive political situation? Or is there something in them more lasting, which feeds back into public life and leads to transformations in consciousness and the social order?

In this final chapter, I will attempt to answer this question by analyzing the nature of the *kyōka* surimono—taken as the pinnacle of the genre—particularly looking at the implications of its unusual structure and approach to the cultural past for new, non-feudal ways of shaping culture and identity in the late Tokugawa Period. Specifically, this chapter will move from micro—a close analysis of the discursive structure of surimono, its text-image “code” and method of creating significance—to macro, an analysis of how this code, which I will argue has some unique traits, unprecedented to its moment in Japanese cultural productions, gives form to a new way of imagining self, other, culture and the connections between them. Underlying this dramatic shift of focus, from text to world, is a belief that conceptualizations of self and reality are structured unconsciously by discourse, be it merely as reflection (the received world represented in the word) or as impetus to change (innovation in language usage leading to changed worldview). In other words, by focusing closely on the unique characteristics of text-image interplay in *kyōka* surimono, as well as of its use and configuration of materials, I hope to highlight a new attitude, a change in the way people approached the past in their efforts to find meaning in the present, as well as a common basis for unity with one another. In this transformation of possibility, the *kyōka* surimono cannot be taken as the source of change (the movement was not broad enough for that), but can be seen as an emblem of change, reflecting in the very structure of its language a new formulation of culture and new possibilities for the shaping of identity, both personal and communal. Moreover, I believe that these changes, for better or worse, have a lingering influence in the formations of modern Japan, from the projection of a national “I” based in part on an understanding of a shared cultural legacy, to a related, bourgeois conceptualization of culture as an organic tissue, not only seamlessly uniting elements of the past, but also

flowing from past to present without break, carrying meaning that defines us in the present world.

Let me begin by outlining four interlocking traits that I find unique in the internal construction of *kyōka* surimono and its uses of materials, to be elaborated in the following pages. First, the *kyōka* surimono takes as its pool of playing pieces all of the elements of culture, past and present, available to its commissioners, without discrimination. Lack of discrimination means that there is no attempt made to classify or characterize elements of the past, accepting some and rejecting others, on the basis of identification with a particular social class, period, genre, or geographic locale.⁷³² Every noteworthy *event*—historical or mythical—*person*—individual or social type—*object*—workaday or special—*place*—local or foreign, laden with historical signification or recent—*practice*—social, ritual or artistic—*belief*—philosophical or religious—and *creation*—literary or artistic—from the known span of time could become the basis of signification in a *kyōka* surimono, without concern for its context or circumstances of origin (native, Chinese or Dutch; courtly, warrior or commoner; history, legend or fiction etc.) The only rule that limits selection of motifs for a surimono is auspiciousness, with overt references to sickness, death and poverty avoided, though even these could be included circumstantially by positive elements in the narratives of which they are a part.⁷³³ *Kyōka* surimono thus operate by extending an open-ended, non-exclusive receptivity to every available aspect of cultural experience, gathering up all manner of categories, beings and activities into its

⁷³² In simple terms, this means that it was not a question of “our” culture, or “theirs,” but of culture as a valuable commodity, the more of which one could have, the better. Thus there are none of the familiar time distinctions (“mukashi,” “nakamukashi,” or “kinsei”) that distinguish productions in *kokugaku*, none of *kokugaku*’s Japan vs. China, or even competition between the “three cities” (Edo, Ōsaka, Kyōto). *Monogatari* are as acceptable as sacred narratives, *setsuwa* and even *otogizōshi* welcome too.

⁷³³ For example, the “Twenty-Four Paragons of Filial Piety” include themes of sickness, poverty and death, but these are overcome by the virtuous actions of sons and daughters, made into the focal points of the pieces. Likewise, there was no hesitation at all to use warrior themes, as the warrior figure stood for positive values like bravery, strength and loyalty, which took the attention away from violence, injury and death.

storehouse of signifiers, for meaningful arrangement in the text-image complexes of its signifying space.

This openness and non-exclusivity was the result, I argue—second point—of *kyōka* surimono's treatment of the cultural past as a single, organic, transcendental entity, fundamentally unified in essence, which was sacred and magical in nature. Generalizing *kokugaku*'s idealization of the ancient past as a perfect place of ontological origins, still capable of spilling its transformative essence onto the present and revivifying all forms through its manifestation in refined language, *kyōka* surimono approached the past as one body, which glowed with a singular, special aura and meaning-giving power. *Kyōka* surimono had no objective, therefore—point three—in meditating or elaborating on the emotional resonances or deeper meanings of these particular elements of the past, as did *noh* in its quotations, transformed narratives and textual allusions, *waka* in *honkadori*, and kabuki with its suggestive *sekai*. Consequently, *kyōka* surimono did not hesitate to employ mismatching elements side by side, freely combining a love story from *Ise Monogatari* with a battle scene from *Heike Monogatari*, for example, without any sense of incongruity. Instead, the language of *kyōka* surimono functioned by reducing the complexities of the elevated past—primarily through processes such as metonymy, association and semantic play—to a series of more easily grasped iconic signifiers, which held a transcendent body of culture as their ultimate signified. These calcified elements were then put them into play in a light, superficial manner, in configurations that not only grafted them organically to one another, but also projected them onto the construction of the present world, as the primary means of creating significance.

For if there is one point of discrimination in *kyōka* surimono's utilization of cultural elements as signifiers, it is a structural division between past and present forms. These comprise two poles or sets of playing pieces, between which

connections are relentlessly drawn by means of overlap, association, allusion, word games and text-image interplay. Over and again these works encode present day forms as either connected or fully merged with those of the vaunted past, using every means available to link them, and to give depth and significance to the present form thereby. In this process, it is precisely because the past towered as a monolithic, transcendental signified, which had merely to be touched to spill its sacred light onto present forms, that the core nature or emotional resonance of the past element was not so important as its “handles,” the superficialities of its signifiers—constituent components, shorthand references, familiar nuances or physical appearances—that allowed for easier past-present mapping. The dual signifying structures of word and image—combined in ways that allowed them to work harmoniously together in back-and-forth associations of links—like the devices of *kyōka* itself, permitted ready comparisons and sets of related doubles for such overlap or connection. This single-minded, ever-present motive of past-present overlay or linking in *kyōka* surimono is its fourth unique characteristic, which can be distinguished from most of the so-called *mitate-e* of *ukiyo-e* and *egoyomi* by its direction: not a travesty of classical figures by their appearance in common present day forms (which in this structure is more properly called *yatsushi*), but a raising up of common forms by their magical connection with the vaunted past.⁷³⁴

It bears emphasis here that it is not simply its use of the past to define the present that makes *kyōka* surimono unique, but rather the *manner* in which it does so. The very idea of a civilization relies on using the past to provide precedent and

⁷³⁴ In fairness, some commercial *mitate-e* do share this orientation, but most tend to be ambiguous, simultaneously uplifting and ennobling the common form, and making fun of the idealized model. Additionally, the overlap tends to be one-to-one, not the complex combinations of elements or recondite references one finds in surimono, although there are exceptions here too. See Nakamachi Keiko’s “*Ukiyo-e* Memories of *Ise Monogatari*” in *Impressions: The Journal of the Ukiyo-e Society of America*, No.22, 54-85, for some examples of multi-layered *mitate* in *ukiyo-e*.

directing models for the present, and in the Tokugawa Period, philosophies that asserted the deep past as the repository of a perfected or ultimate reality on which the present should be modeled were highly influential.⁷³⁵ Yet because the *kyōka* surimono's use of the past is open and non-exclusive, it is not a particular past (that of ancient China, courtly practices or the poetic tradition) that is singled out in order to support the position of a specific socio-political group, but a thoroughly generalized use of the past as icon, open to all users, and equally defining all people in the present. This idealized past is thus posited (through an act of appropriation) as a shared inheritance, available to anyone willing to partake of it, and not owned by any one group or tradition.⁷³⁶ The storehouse of signifiers accumulated by rummaging the past can thus be used to illuminate any present day form, even the most humble, and provides a sense of identity and solidarity to all those who employ its codes, creating collectivity through reference to its shared elements. Such a structure bears similarities to the projection of a "Japanese cultural identity" in modern times, in which citizens are defined in reference to a nebulous cultural past, spilling onto the present and posited as their legacy, which gives them a sense of common identity and solidarity.⁷³⁷ Although it is hardly the *kyōka* surimono that gives rise to that structure,⁷³⁸ we can begin to see similarities in the past-as-open-legacy posited in

⁷³⁵ The structural foundation for Motoori's *kokugaku* poetics, with its emphasis on revival of the past through active usage of classical language, can be found, in fact, in the philosophy of Ogyū Sorai (1666-1729), who asserted that one could return to the ancient time of the Sages and best understand their words by replicating their original language use.

⁷³⁶ An excellent essay on the development of this view of cultural artifacts as shared property is Thomas Harper's "The Tale of Genji in the Eighteenth Century: Keichū, Mabushi, Norinaga" in C. Andrew Gerstle, Ed, *18th Century Japan* (Allen & Unwin, 1989).

⁷³⁷ One distinct difference that should be noted is the total openness of surimono commissioners in their choice of materials, which went beyond the borders of what would later be clarified as "Japan." But, of course, the construction of a "Japanese cultural identity" also includes elements that derived outside the contemporary political borders of Japan, reworked as "influences" on this identity.

⁷³⁸ But surimono do contribute, in this particular regard, to a number of similar movements in the Tokugawa Period, particularly *kokugaku*, which made classic texts comprehensible, and commercial woodblock printing, which allowed them literally to become possessions, available to anyone with the money and will to purchase. Surimono is also somewhat distinct, moreover, in *activating* classical knowledge creatively, just as Motoori had proposed one should do with *waka*.

surimono and other cultural activities of the Tokugawa Period that give rise to the modern formation.⁷³⁹

Two tropes have infiltrated my discussion of the unique characteristics of the *kyōka* surimono thus far, which require some unraveling. The first, with “motive,” “objective,” “rules,” “playing pieces,” “configuration” and “put into play” is the metaphor of the board game, highlighted in the somewhat arcane title of this chapter, which refers to a central element in Hermann Hesse’s final novel, subtitled The Glass Bead Game.⁷⁴⁰ In this futuristic work, Hesse presents what initially appears to be an ideal society, no longer focused on capitalistic gain and the wars that result from it, but rather on a spiritual exercise based on a game played with myriad beads of patterned and colored glass, each of which represented a particular monument in the global history of human activity, intellectual development and creative endeavor. This “glass bead game” was played by arranging these suggestively materialized elements, piece by piece, into patterns that connected them in unexpected and revealing ways, irrespective of chronology, genre or place of origin, creating fascinating constellations out of all of the recognized facets in the spiritual history of the human being. The game could be played in solitude, or in collaboration with another, before an audience whose purpose was to follow the movements of this grand chess match, and recognize the associations, allusions and thematic links by which relations of meaning were produced. The result was an activity that summoned up and activated all of the diverse aspects of the human psyche, as they had been expressed in past acts of creativity, learning and symbolic action, putting them into play for the fulfillment, the novel originally posits, of human life.

⁷³⁹ On this topic, see Eiko Ikegami’s Bonds of Civility: Aesthetic Networks and the Political Origins of Japanese Culture (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), which I will discuss in some detail later in this chapter.

⁷⁴⁰ Magister Ludi: The Glass Bead Game New York: Bantam Books, 1970.

The *kyōka* surimono, as I have elucidated its form and function, was certainly also a game or sorts, as well as a mental exercise in wit, style and learning built of a collaboration of players, interacting with the elements of one another's creativity, often in conjunction with a pre-determined theme. These works were presented as gifts, but also in the manner of riddles, with the role of the recipient being to puzzle out the allusions and connections embedded in the work by the giver, implicitly positing their deep connection by means of shared knowledge and ways of thought. The surimono exchange was thus a scene of "play," defined here as a freely-chosen, temporary withdrawal from the circumstances of ordinary experience that allowed for its creative reformation, involving elements of make-believe, opportunity and friendly competition. Christine Guth's description of the Japanese sense of play has many correspondences with my description of surimono thus far:

The kinds of play traditional to Japan, whether serious or irreverent, reflect dominant social and cultural values. Most are communal activities rooted in ritual that emphasize social interaction and at the same time offer participants an outlet for individual expression. Because of the high premium placed on cultural accomplishment, games requiring literary knowledge and verbal wit or artistic and calligraphic skill are especially prominent. Whatever form it takes, play is important in maintaining Japan's relationship to its past.⁷⁴¹

There can be little question, then, of surimono's inclusion as a form of Japanese play, and Hesse's "bead game," although certainly more idealistic and less self-interested than surimono, serves as a superb metaphor for broaching the nature of this game's rules. For as I have described, the elements of surimono were taken from all of the recognized aspects of life past and present, evocative moments in history, literature, and lore, the structures, beings and artifacts of various times and places, with competition for originality in the exchange of prints driving commissioners to ever smaller details and broader compass. This material, in a step that differentiates

⁷⁴¹ *Asobi: Play in the Arts of Japan* (Katanoah Museum of Art, 1992).

surimono from similar artistic languages, was then *concretized* as individual icons, and arranged through various types of linking into an interconnected pattern, making intersections between past and present forms. Here, however, the original nature of these elements was of less importance in their use than their superficial qualities (the colors and designs of the beads), as though these past elements themselves held a power that could be magically activated by mere proximity, and could otherwise be emptied of signifying content and depth, like hard glass beads.⁷⁴²

But there is a second trope to be considered here, and with market-oriented terminology like “property,” “storehouse” and “inheritance,” I wish to call attention to the primarily merchant basis of *kyōka* surimono’s creation and exchange, and the rise of a certain bourgeois attitude towards culture as commodity—by which I mean a reduction of select idealized elements of the classical past to symbols employed to display the status of their users as cultivated beings. In *ukiyo-e*, we see this effect from early on in the robes of courtesans, which contain pictorial allusions to classical literary works such as *Genji* or *Ise*, or hints of a famous *waka*, in order to show off their wearers as highly civilized and elegant. For allusions, as the poets of Edo (both *haikai* and *kyōka*) knew, can convey a greater sense of mastery than a lengthy diatribe, allowing the poet to coolly and effortlessly gain access to the exalted status of a given work as symbol by merely brushing against it. In fact, however, most allusions are relatively easy to construct, particularly when the material for them has been standardized, as *Ise*, *Genji* and *Hyakunin isshu* had been by the nineteenth century.⁷⁴³

⁷⁴² For example, in a surimono like “The Sparrow Shell,” the moral content, tone and social context of the fairytale “The Tongue-Cut Sparrow” are of virtually no consequence for its use in the piece. Only the elements of the fairytale, removed from their temporal, geographic and semantic origins and concretized thematically have place in the surimono’s structure. So “sparrow” connects to both shell type and cage, “cage” to a particular contemporary regional product, “treasure” to the Seven Gods, “Seven Gods” to their magic possessions, including the cape and hat of hiding, “hiding” to the sparrow in the woods, “hiding sparrow” to springtime grasses, grasses and seven to the seven herbs etc.

⁷⁴³ On standardization and uses of imagery as icon, see Nakamachi (2000), and Joshua Mostow’s *Pictures of the Heart: The Hyakunin Isshu in Word and Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1996).

Nevertheless, such uses of the classical tradition have the power to define their users in keeping with their refined aesthetics. And certainly this was the case with surimono, which employed a rarer set of allusive materials, in witty, original and sometimes even strained manner, but always superficially, never so concerned about the content of the source as its status as part of an exalted, auspicious past.

Where surimono differ from the “Mona Lisa t-shirt” effect, moreover, in such “commodification of culture,” is in the indirect language of its references, which freely incorporate other standard elements of poetic imagery or cultural monuments in a puzzle-like manner, lending the references a sense of greater mastery. Rather than an image of the Mona Lisa, a surimono on this topic might depict local products of Vinci, grapes for example, using the conventional poetic trope “laughing mountains of spring” to refer to both the background of the portrait and that “famous smile,” while connecting laughter and wine—through a popular brand called “Leonardo”—or overlay Mona Lisa with a smiling Yoshiwara courtesan in image or verse. Of little interest, on the other hand, would be a thoughtful consideration of the meaning of the portrait in its historical circumstances—though there are a few exceptions to this general statement. Perpetually oriented to the surface in its employment of material, which is precisely what allows for easy links, surimono nevertheless takes depth from the structure of its language, which although comprised of the various elements of cultural knowledge in hollowed out form, is given dimension by their associative arrangements. Nevertheless, a classical motif like the Mona Lisa would be an essential, indispensable element of the work, along with its subtle connection or fusion with some aspect of contemporary reality the sole bases for the work’s existence and claim to significance.

The power of this past-present link, as I have described it, derives in part from a generalization of a specific conceptual structure taken from Motoori, namely that the

formations of the ancient past had sacred value for investing the present with quality and significance. But behind *kyōka* surimono's belief that the structures of established culture contain some sort of associative magic is also the awe of a rising merchant class in its encounter with the difficult language and refined structures of classical literature. Despairing of ever recreating the same, or perhaps even of ever wholly and deeply understanding it, the merchants appropriate this past through gestures of allusion, gaining mastery over it through their active use of it as signifiers, linked and united with the more easily explicable forms of their world. But the nature of these signifiers is hard and hollow, hollow because the sign points not to its interior, but only to a grand, abstract signified, the exalted past, hard because these cultural elements are not treated as malleable, capable of being reworked, but can only be employed as set entities.⁷⁴⁴ There is, in fact, a certain element of nihilism—an “end of creativity” if you will—in Hesse's concept of the “glass bead game,” as in *kyōka* surimono as well, a belief that everything worth saying has already been said, all of the possibilities played out, and all that one can do now is endlessly rearrange the elements, and try to spark vestiges of meaning thereby. Meanwhile, all faith is focused on the past, which is believed to have the juice for injecting meaning into the present. Rather than entering deeply into some aspect of the past and analyzing it, however, the commissioners of *kyōka* surimono prefer to possess it, as icon, and to gather together as many of these icons as they could, in the hope that the power of the past can be gained by possession of these symbolic elements alone.

⁷⁴⁴ By this I mean that whereas *noh* or *honkadori* delve into textual quotations, reworking them to fit new circumstances, surimono approaches the past much like kabuki does with its *sekai*, in which the set of connotations of a particular past “world” are pre-established, capable of being overlain onto new, present world circumstances, but not themselves reworked. A simple way of rephrasing this argument is to say that the signifiers in *kyōka* surimono merely summon the classical structure, by metonymy or association, and do not open up those structures for reformation, only mobilizing them for connection to the present.

Nevertheless, the storehouse of cultural knowledge that forms the basis for the creation and exchange of *kyōka* surimono was communal, as these were works made by small groups, rarely individuals acting alone, and shared among select circles in a way that emphasized mutual understanding. These factors allowed past surimono themselves to form the foundation for new inspiration, enhancing the store of cultural elements, as well as the associative signifiers by which they could be summoned, which became increasingly tenuous as participants reached for wit and originality.⁷⁴⁵ Such shared activity on the past, which was posited as an open and common legacy for all participants, forms the basis for community among them. As in other aesthetic societies of the Tokugawa Era—a subject taken as the focus of a recent study by Eiko Ikegami, to be examined later in this chapter—mutual pursuit and enactment of established cultural codes provided the foundation for both new types of social organization and revised definitions of personal and communal identity, beyond those promulgated by the *bakufu*. Rather than being united by profession, family lineage, locale or designated social class, the participants in cultural activities came together to learn, practice and perfect a “way,” be it tea ceremony, *haikai* poetry or flower arrangement, subordinating all other criteria of conventional social definition to that cause. Taking new names, they checked their relative class status, wealth or power at the door, entering a hierarchy based only on one’s state of aesthetic achievement. With this alternative ideal structuring their activities and endeavors, participants found new ways for relating to one another, transcending traditional limits of geography, networking outside of their usual circles, achieving community through their group pursuits and enactment of cultural codes, and intimacy through understated communications—based on specialized knowledge mutually shared—that posited

⁷⁴⁵ For example, because earlier surimono depict the *sennin* Huang Chuping changing goats to stone with a touch of his staff, later surimono are able to reference this story with a mere depiction of striking with sticks (Keyes 1984, 28-29) or mention of stone (Keyes 1985, 229).

their union as like-minded beings. Such connections implied nothing less than a way out from the feudal mode of social organization by strictly defined, stable, and localized hereditary classes, as well as an ascension of individuals above the external definitions of identity forced upon them by the state, according to the new communal and individual identities they gained as practitioners.

Strictly speaking, surimono-making was not in itself an aesthetic pursuit on which groups were founded, but rather an offshoot of poetry circles, which sought to display the talents, knowledge and mastery of its members in these productions. In the language of *kyōka* surimono in particular, however, we can find a deeper reflection of changing attitudes towards the cultural past and its role in defining present day identities. In some respects, the *kyōka* surimono stands over other Tokugawa communal pursuits of cultural codes as a kind of super-code, taking as its object not merely the aesthetics of tea, *ikebana* or *noh* chanting, but *all* of the established forms of culture. Granted, these were not delved into deeply, but were nevertheless referenced in an allusive way that demonstrated a suave control over them. In fact, it was precisely because the treatment of these cultural elements was so superficial that they could be so easily manipulated, linked to one another and onto the present, in a manner that summoned up their aura and prestige. Weaving together one strand of the cultural code to another, sometimes on the basis of nothing more than an overlap in the signifiers used to reference them, *kyōka* surimono made a game of history, transforming elements of cultural memory into playthings for associative handling by its makers. But the weave and form of the game should be taken seriously. By tying past and present together, through grafts, overlay and associative chains, *kyōka* surimono brought the power of these idealized cultural codes of the past to bear on the present formation, thereby investing it with a sense of significance. In its non-exclusive use of the past to shape contemporary identity and meaning, finding

continuity and unity between modern and ancient actors, the language of surimono reflects not only the specific *haikaika* teachings of Magao, but also the general movement that Ikegami traces in the Tokugawa aesthetic societies, giving cultural codes from the past authority that allows for the transformation of the present.

It is thus the language of *kyōka* surimono that stands out as its most significant aspect, both in terms of the uniqueness of the genre and of its relation to the new bases on which community, implicit communications, group and personal identities were beginning to be founded in late Tokugawa. In particular, the combination of elements in surimono shows us with the greatest clarity the non-rational discursive structure by which “culture” as an open-ended, organic entity is assembled, in a sort of “connect-the-dots” activity that links various highlights from disparate civilizations and individuals into a comprehensive conglomerate. Such a configuration of culture is notably different from that which had previously been selectively employed by particular social groups to guard their privileges, for culture here is treated as being not only the property of everyone, but also the means of uniting (not dividing) all kinds of people within its compass. Unlike elite configurations, in which culture functions as a barrier, keeping the untrained away by setting up intricate rules and strict, proper ways of practice and interpretation, while only treating a narrow segment of creative production as worthy of attention and imitation, in the language of surimono, culture actually becomes a means of inclusion, inviting participants to make easy use of its iconic structures. Not only then are elements of the cultural past undifferentiated in terms of level, quality and tone in the selection of materials, they are also casually employed in their recombination in these pieces. The apparent contradiction between this cavalier usage and the sacred aura given to the cultural structures of the past in *kyōka* surimono is resolved when we realize that this past was “owned” by its users as a most valuable possession, and thus something both very

close to them—part of their very definition of self-worth in fact—and very precious. But ownership itself came from mastery in usage, which made the users the powerful manipulators of these structures, rather than their passive subjects, struggling to understand them.

How did surimono language allow for such mastery of these cultural codes? Mainly, I have argued, through the very superficiality of its usage, which did not typically open up elements of the cultural code for analysis, but operated on them as whole, closed forms, using the “handles” of their familiar parts or aspects as signifiers to refer to them allusively. This process was facilitated by a double structure of signification, an interplay between text and image that allowed for the mobilization of cultural elements in an allusive, back and forth fashion, not requiring a directed penetration into the essence of these elements as the motion that creates meaning. For whatever their calm, conservative appearances, surimono are almost never stable in their structures of signification, but internally more like an electron, or sometimes a set of electrons, bounced between two sets of contrasting polarities, past and present. These poles can be represented individually by text and image, each taking a single role, or text and image can conjoin in making past-present friction. The movement between the poles may be swift and straight, a direct reflection of the past in the present form, or full of unexpected clashes, twists and curveballs, with electrons bouncing into each other, as well as into the significant past/present forms. But meaning, the transfer along a chain of signifiers, is created with each strike, which drives the past into the present formation or finds the line where the present becomes a significant parallel of the past. Such relations would not be possible, I argue, without the *kyōka* surimono’s double signification of text and image.

Text-image complexes are common in Japan from some of the earliest creative productions, but few have ever taken on the complexity that one finds in word-picture

interplay in *kyōka* surimono. Here, image is never a mere illustration of the text, reproducing just its literal content, but functions as an additional dimension, an extension of poetry into visual form. The devices on which *kyōka* rely offer some of the means for transforming a verse creatively into an image, pictures that pun on their textual sources, allude to them in unexpected ways, or that take on dual signification, as in pivot words. At times, even the distinct functioning of words and images as signifiers breaks down, with language taking on some of the properties of images, and pictures some of the qualities of words. The resulting unions, which take diverse forms in the range of *kyōka* surimono, allow for an unprecedented degree of interaction, a set of links that interconnect the varied elements that summoned by the words and images. The constellations drawn are never the same, sometimes a web, linking various themes, sometimes a spiral, spinning around a single theme, sometimes a structure in which the elements of word and image conjoin to form the rails of a ladder, leading one up to the goal, the linking of past and present. Taking the signifying structure of *kyōka* surimono as the basis for its particular attitude towards and definition of culture, I will begin now by focusing in closely on this uniquely complex language of text-image interplay in *kyōka* surimono, the nature of its materials and their configuration. From here, I believe we can trace the implications of this specific structure of discourse to ongoing transformations within the feudal order, and the emergence of new modes of social organization and identity within the Edo aesthetic societies.

The Language of Surimono: Some Generic Types of Word-Image Relations

When I speak of a surimono language, or code, I refer to the process of signification in the reception of any given piece, which begins with appreciation and apprehension of an image, moves to the poetry, and then back to the details of the

image, often seen the second time in the new context provided by the words, while the image, from the first, provides expectations for the poetry, and gives its reading a particular flavor. One of the common devices of surimono, therefore, was to keep the recipient guessing about the poetic theme, to present an image related only loosely, by word play or association, to the verses, so that the meaning of the image fundamentally alters after reading the poetry, or the expectation set up by the image was pleasantly frustrated by the literary content. Worthy of analysis here is both this sequential process itself, with its sudden twists, turns, drops, inversions and variety of funhouse mirrors, and its final resting place, in which text and image have conjoined in a particular relationship to make a statement of some sort. This lingering statement generally involves a related fusion, of past model and present form, or of diverse cultural signifiers, which takes place precisely through this text-image interaction. Because of the hybrid nature of these works, there has been an assumption, as we have encountered in Chapter One with Jack Hillier, that each of its components must therefore be incomplete or inadequate alone, requiring or at least making room for its complement.⁷⁴⁶ The idea that a text, full and complete unto itself, should conjoin with an image, also clearly able to stand alone as a work of beauty (as its history of reception in the West, for one, reveals), is out of line with conventional European thought since the time of the Renaissance, yet that is exactly how I will argue that surimono must be treated here. Nevertheless, despite the innate ability of each form to function independently—*kyōka* for surimono often originating in poetry meetings and sometimes finding its way into anthologies as well, their illustrations reprinted without poetry in commercial formats⁷⁴⁷—within surimono these two genres are arranged not

⁷⁴⁶ “Some notion of their purport has to be known to explain the slightness, often of the design...the brevity of the drawing, akin to vignetting, is often suggestive like the pregnant dots ... of the writer.” (1960, 108)

⁷⁴⁷ See “Commercially Produced Surimono” in *The Poetic Image*, 17-19

only to coexist, but actually to embrace, coincide, overlay and redefine one another in particular ways. Interaction, in sum, does not necessarily imply that text and image are incomplete alone, but it does mean that they become something more than their already sufficient bodies when they are coupled. Like different parts of an orchestra, text and image in surimono amplify one another, repeating main themes with variation, harmonizing in particular ways, and clashing interestingly in others, thereby creating a rich depth and complexity.

Harmony in surimono often means that a classic motif, played out in either text or image, is given a close contemporary equivalent in its complement. In the surimono series *Twenty-Four Native Paragons of Filial Piety for the Honchō Group* 本町連本朝二十四孝 (Figure 50), for example, Japanese equivalents are found for the Chinese stories conventionally used to exemplify this Confucian virtue.⁷⁴⁸ Here, the caption identifies the scene as from the *Taiheiki* (太平記 • *Record of the Great Pacification*, compiled c.1372) and the crouching warrior as Ōkura Yorifusa 大蔵頼房, who has just learned of his father's plans for rebellion against the Shogun Ashikaga Takauji 足利尊氏 (1305-1358). Torn between loyalties to his father and his lord, Yorifusa decides that he can best protect both by revealing his father's plot. The illustration is a fairly straightforward depiction of this scene. The verse, however, leaving the historical setting behind, finds its contemporary equivalent in New Year imagery:

<i>Ne no hi shite</i>	Celebrating the Rat Day
<i>Kimi ga tame mata</i>	For my lord, and also
<i>Oya no tame</i>	For my parent
<i>Ryō te ni hikeru</i>	With both hands I pull
<i>Nobe no hime matsu</i>	Princess Pines from the fields ⁷⁴⁹

⁷⁴⁸ One of several series on the “Twenty-Four Filial Paragons” by Gakutei; in this case, the group name puns with the title. The replacement of Chinese paragons with Japanese is not unique to this series, but had been established by at least the mid-seventeenth century.

⁷⁴⁹ 子の日して君かたまた親のため両手にひける野辺の姫松. There is a hint of *Kokinshū* 357 in this verse. See Chapter 2.



Figure 50: Ōkura Yorifusa, Minister of the Imperial Stables of the Right (大藏右馬守頼房) from the series *Twenty-Four Paragons of Filial Piety for the Honchō Group* (本町連本朝二十四孝). A *shikishi-ban* surimono for a New Year, c. 1820, with *kyōka* by Shunmintei Tanenari, illustration by Harunobu Gakutei. Phoenix Museum of Art.

Poetry and illustration are here established as parallel links, across chronological space, with consideration for master and parent in one setting transformed, with apparent directness, to another. It is worth considering, however, exactly who *kimi* (lord and master) refers to in the modern space. The historical reference suggests shogun, but in the context of court poetry, the term implies emperor, supported to some extent by the “princess” pines, referring to young shoots (*hime* in the general sense of young girl) but also recalling the divine princesses of imperial history. In Tokugawa usage, moreover, both *kimi* and *hime* were used to mean a courtesan, while *oya* can also loosely refer to the leader of a gang or master of a business, especially in this context, a brothel owner.⁷⁵⁰ Therefore, although the verse at one level parallels the image, at another it pointedly switches loyalties, while at a third inverts it into a particularly modern, “floating world” statement, with primary affection directed at one’s lover and the sacrifices needed to obtain her, an entirely different form of “heroism” than depicted in the image. A small hint of its floating world connection, however, does appear in the image, in the crest that appears prominently above the Shogun, Ashikaga Takauji, but is not actually his historical symbol.⁷⁵¹ Rather, this mark was originally associated with the Minamoto clan, but in the Tokugawa Period was utilized by a number of kabuki actors, including Ichikawa Yazoō III.⁷⁵²

A similar sort of operation, although entirely opposite in orientation, can be found in the series *Mitate Shichifukujin* (見立七福神 • “Stand-ins for the Seven Gods”), as seen in this image of a contemporary female beauty by Gakutei, the illustrator of the “24 Paragons” above (Figure 51). Here, it is the poems that provide

⁷⁵⁰ See Cecilia Segawa Seigle, *Yoshiwara: The Glittering World of the Japanese Courtesan* (University of Hawai’i Press, 1993), 22, on the use of “oya” for brothel owners.

⁷⁵¹ The Ashikaga crest from the time of Takauji incorporated the paulownia (*kiri*). The Ashikagas never used the *sasarindō* crest shown here.

⁷⁵² This crest actually appears on other surimono illustrated by Gakutei, including a pentptych of the Soga Brothers drama, with strong theater ties. The confession scene in this work may also have been from a play, or perhaps Gakutei merely recycled the *sasarindō* crest from the previous work.

the classical reading—in fact, with typical *kyōka* surimono complexity, a series of such readings—laying various masks onto the modern figure. Although the title indirectly identifies her as a representation of Benten, playing her emblematic lute, the first poem transforms her to Saohime, the Goddess of Spring:

<i>Benten no</i>	Appearing like the tassels
<i>Yōraku to min</i>	Of Benten's headdress
<i>Saohime no</i>	Saohime's
<i>Yanagi no kami ni</i>	Willowy hair
<i>Musubu shiratsuyu</i>	Is bound up with white dew ⁷⁵³

Here, Benten's roots in India (as the Bodhisattva Sarasvati) are played up with the reference to *yōraku*, a symbol of class status there, and also a term related to Buddhist art. But the primary reference in the poem is to the native goddess Saohime, with whom Benten is connected by appearance, thus becoming in essence her manifestation. Saohime is often depicted in purely natural terms, superimposed on the spring landscape (as wearing a skirt of mist for example), and here the dewy willows of spring are made into her decorative hair, resembling Benten's (and the modern figure's). The second poem provides yet another native overlay for Benten and the contemporary figure:

<i>Benten no</i>	On a day when
<i>Yukari no iro ni</i>	The color of Benten's origins
<i>Kasumu hi ya</i>	Mists over in purple--
<i>Biwa mo kakayuru</i>	The Mountain Goddess of Fuji
<i>Fuji no yamahime</i>	Holding a lute ⁷⁵⁴

Now Benten and her modern equivalent are given a new mask, as the goddess Konohana Sakuya Hime, said to reside on the peak of Mt. Fuji. This goddess, moreover, took earthly form as Kaguyahime in *Taketori Monogatari*, before returning

⁷⁵³ 弁天の瓔珞とみん棹姫の柳の髪にむすぶしら露。

⁷⁵⁴ 弁天のゆかりのいろに霞む日や琵琶もかかゆるふじの山姫。 *Yukari no iro* (literally “colors of one's relations/origins”) meant purple, the conventional color of mists and also wisteria (*fuji*). The mists are those of spring, and Fuji's peak.



Figure 51: *Benten* (弁天) from the series *Mitate Shichifukujin* (見立七福神). A *shikishi-ban* surimono for a New Year, c. 1827-8, with illustration by Harunobu Gakutei. Private Collection.

to the moon, referenced pictorially by the crescent moons of the lute.⁷⁵⁵ The lingering message the viewer receives after these quick transformations is of an essential unity between the modern beauty and her classical forms, the changing faces of an eternal female.

The division of roles between text and image do not always fall so neatly into classical and modern parallels in reference to the same source, however. Often, the parts played by text and image in the signification process are mixed and intertwined. In this surimono (Figure 52), entitled “Stone” and part of a series of three for the *Ken* game (rock-paper-scissors), text and image reflect back upon on another, supplying each other with different contexts and multiple sources of meaning. The illustration depicts a modern beauty making a traditional tray landscape (*suhamama*)—here a mountain of pebbles—of the kind often employed as complements to poems at *uta-awase*. A painting in the alcove behind her, mounted on purple cloth, shows a goat-herder in Chinese-style dress, with an oddly stiff goat. The poems provide further references:

<i>Harugesiki</i>	Even without borrowing a single stone
<i>Tsukuru bon-e no</i>	From the spring landscape
<i>Ishi hitotsu</i>	Made on the tray
<i>Karade kototaru</i>	It's complete
<i>Otsukuba no yama</i>	The male peak of Mt. Tsukuba ⁷⁵⁶
<i>Wagōjin</i>	When the God of Conjugal Bliss
<i>Waraisomureba</i>	Gives his first smile of the year
<i>Ishi wo mote</i>	Even mountains
<i>Tsukurishi yama mo</i>	Made of stone
<i>Haru wa uruou</i>	Moisten with springtime ⁷⁵⁷

⁷⁵⁵ Another parallel to this story is found in a legend regarding Benten, implying that she allowed herself to be born as a human to answer a childless couple's prayers, but returned to her form as a goddess, exactly like Kaguyahime, when she reached marriageable age. *Taketori monogatari* also makes an explicit point of how Kaguyahime's hair is done up, just as in the first verse here.

⁷⁵⁶ 春けしきつくる盆絵の石ひとつからてことたるをつくはの山. Curiously, the 1890 facsimile simplifies the poem by altering the wording: 石ひとつのせてことたる (“adding just one stone”).

⁷⁵⁷ 和合神わらひそむれは石をもてつくるし山も春はうるはふ.



Figure 52: *Stone* (石) from the series *A Set of Three Pictures for the Children's Game Ken* (幼遊拳三番続の内). A *shikishi-ban* surimono for the New Year of 1823, with *kyōka* verses by Rakuseian, Sekijōsha Mitose, and Shakusōan, and illustration by Katsushika Hokusai. Chester Beatty Library.

<i>Murasaki ni</i>	In mists purple
<i>Kasumeba kore mo</i>	Like Lady Murasaki
<i>Genji na mo</i>	The name of Genji is hidden
<i>Komoru suna mote</i>	Away in Ishiyama Temple
<i>Tsukuru ishiyama</i>	Making a stone mountain of sand ⁷⁵⁸

The full complexities of *kyōka* surimono are here on full display, with multiple connections between the elements of image and text forming an entire network of references. First, the last poem makes it evident that the modern woman here represents Lady Murasaki, who according to legend shut herself away in Ishiyama (“Stone Mountain”) Temple to write the first chapters of her extensive romance, The Tale of Genji, making a mountainous work a word (sand grain) at a time. *Murasaki* (“purple”) gives us the color of the scroll mounting and the woman’s obi, as well as the spring mists, while *ishi* (“stone”) goes back to the central theme, the fist gesture in the hand game, and to the tray mountain (*yama*). We can then see the woman making the classical style landscape as a figure for Lady Murasaki composing the *Genji*. The first two poems, however, present an erotic view of the woman, in keeping with the “spring” motif, with references to her shaping the male peak—one of the double peaks of Mt. Tsukuba—in the first verse, and engaging in the first sexual intercourse of the New Year in the second. Typical of Hokusai’s illustrations with a hint of eroticism, he utilizes a wavy, frenetic line for details, such as the light blue kimono hem and especially here the red under-kimono and sash, themselves sexually suggestive in *ukiyo-e*. As with Benten, then, the female figure here thus has multiple aspects, simultaneously of both floating and classical worlds, an object of desire both for her beauty and traditional creative ability.

The links go on yet further, however, led by a purely visual parallel, which follows the title of the print. The painting within the print depicts the Taoist immortal Huang Chuping (黄初平), who began life as a humble mountain goat herder, before

⁷⁵⁸ むらさきに霞めはこれも源氏名のこもる砂もてつくる石山.

retiring to a cave to meditate for forty years. When he emerged, enlightened, he discovered that all of his goats had turned to stone, but that he now had the power, with just a touch of his staff, to bring them to life or turn them to stone again. This reference, a standard for a sheep year (goats being the closest equivalent on the sheepless Japanese islands), gives us the present day zodiac sign, for 1823. It also links explicitly to the woman, who reaches out with her stick to make a mountain of stone come realistically to life, thus precisely mirroring the action in the painting, right down to her posture. In light of the first poems, moreover, the ability to turn flesh to stone and back again is given an erotic overlay, in keeping with the “male peak” completed by the woman. In this realm of reference too we have a duplication, a doubling of the woman with *ga* and *zoku* implications, as religious immortal and sexual being, once more in regard to “stone,” the title of the print, and its connection to the popular hand game *ken*. As in *ken*, therefore, which provides the arching theme for the set, elements in the world transform in relation to one another, now superior, now dependent, with no stable point of absolute determination. As we will see, however, this is a fairly typical position for *kyōka* surimono. Once more, this print leaves us with a wealth of overlays, almost mind-boggling in their complex interactions. Text and image, once more, function as layers with certain points of correspondence, which align to transform the impressions we receive from each alone.

We might be tempted to think, given their full range of associations in tandem, that there is something individually incomplete about the poetry and image on this work, or on surimono in general. Naoki Sakai, for example, describes the second part of his *Voices of the Past*, dealing with Tokugawa popular literature, as outlining “a new discursive space” in which “a written text no longer maintained its autonomy but had to be supplemented by nonverbal texts.”⁷⁵⁹ This concept of “supplement,” which

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gives one of Sakai's chapters its title, implicitly assumes that word-image combinations proceed, or are made possible, by a perceived lack in one or the other of the signifying systems involved. If poetry were capable of producing full meaning on its own, would it require an illustration? If paintings or photographs were able to "speak," would they need titles or captions? In fact, this idea of mutual insufficiency, which posited poetry and painting as "sister arts," is fairly ancient in Western thought, most clearly expressed in Renaissance comparisons and debates about the relative value of each system. Yet while it may in some cases, such as narrative picture scrolls or *gesaku* fiction, hold that text and image are insufficient alone, leaning on its complement for completion, this is clearly not the case for *surimono*. As poetry presentation sheets, in fact, if this definition is to hold, *surimono* must necessarily have poetry that is complete and capable of independence. The poems on "Stone," for example, particularly the third, are able to stand alone, even as individual verses in a *kyōka* anthology, although the first two would almost certainly require an explanatory preface, essentially describing the content of the image ("on watching a young woman build a tray landscape at the New Year...").⁷⁶⁰ Such headnotes, however, were part of classical poetry, so should not be considered of themselves to mark these verses as somehow inferior in representational power. Are images then merely decorative? In fact, we can find no substantial difference between this image of a young beauty and an *ukiyo-e bijinga*, which was sold and considered complete independent of any text. The commercial reprinting of some *surimono* images and the overlap of some *surimono* poems (particularly by leaders in the movement) with those in *kyōka* anthologies support these assertions of mutual independence. Nevertheless, we cannot doubt that the combination of one fullness with another leads to an expanded range of

⁷⁶⁰ In fact, one way of describing the role of illustration on a *surimono* is as such a preface. Images precede verses and give us some idea of the content to come, though often too the expectation is a false one.

reference, a “surplus of signification” as Sakai puts it, although the layering of one poem upon another can have a similar effect, so we should not consider this necessarily due only to the combination of two distinct signifying systems.

Returning to the nature of text-image interactions in surimono, we have thus far considered three types, based on the common links in surimono between contemporary and classical worlds. Sometimes the image is of a classical element, the poetry linking it to the contemporary world, sometimes vice-versa, and sometimes the text and imagery are mixed in this regard, both making references to present day and historical/legendary models. Nevertheless, not all surimono are so blatantly structured as a series of links strung between two poles, the present and past, or the elegant and the vulgar. Kabuki surimono, for example, most typically relate contemporary action on the stage—though admittedly this too is often comprised of iconic moments from the past—to the symbols and practices of the New Year, which are again contemporary, but shadowed by traditional practices, thus not clearly distinguishing the paradigm and its modern form. Regardless, many kabuki prints find a way of reflecting on the traditions of this dramatic art, as in this work (Figure 53), based on *Uirōuri* (“The Medicine Vendor”), later made part of the *Kabuki jūhachiban* (“18 Great Kabuki Plays of the Ichikawa Family”). Here the role of the lightning-tongued medicine vendor is played by Danjūrō VII (1791-1859), who looks up at a portrait of his predecessor, Danjūrō IV (1711-1778) in the role of the “Dragon King,” thus giving the zodiac sign for the contemporary year (1820), as well as a reflection on the theatrical past. The poem combines *Uirōuri*-style stage speech (the formulas and promised powers of magical medical powders) with related New Year



Figure 53: “Ichikawa Danjūrō in the Role of the Medicine Vendor [Uirōuri]” A *shikishi-ban* surimono for a New Year, c. 1820, with *kyōka* verse by Takamori and illustration by Utagawa Kunisada. Private Collection.

poetic imagery to comment on the character, celebrated for his slick and speedy mouth:

<i>Saku ume no</i>	Add a touch of the fragrance
<i>Kaori fukumeba</i>	of blossoming plum
<i>Ima masa ni</i>	And now, more than ever
<i>Shita yoku mawaru</i>	It trills its tongue rapidly
<i>Yado no uguisu</i>	The warbler at the gate ⁷⁶¹

Here the poetry, like the inset of Danjūrō IV, takes what would otherwise be a perfectly conventional stage representation, such as one might find in many commercial *yakusha-e*, and transforms it into a clever reflection on the play in the contexts of both the contemporary moment and of tradition. Primarily by clever use of language, the kabuki role is made to fit into the structures of celebration at the New Year, and thus into a past-oriented reflection that finds the present moment as the cyclical repetition of what has come before (Danjūrō IV watching VII). The work in this sense could be described as “mixed,” with text and image combining to refer to past structures, but as these are the structures of the present day as well, the distinction is not as clear as their fusion, which relies on innately doubling/repeating elements (stage role, New Year imagery). The ultimate effect of the print, thus, is to incorporate kabuki neatly within the contemporary version of the traditional New Year celebration.

To this point, I have spoken of harmonies between text and images, but it is possible too to look at dissonances, which also tend to serve the purpose of binding classical model and present form, bringing text and image together at points of correspondence, though here with a greater sense of friction. The “stone” *surimono*, in fact, already shows a good degree of dissonance, between the elegant image, with just hints of Hokusai’s erotic brush, and the sexual implications of the verses. The “24

⁷⁶¹ さく梅の薫りふくめはいままさに舌よくまはる宿のうぐいす.

Paragons” has a smooth harmony on the surface, but also a touch of dissonance in the subordinate *ukiyo* reading. As these examples suggest, dissonance arises primarily from the poetry, which clashes against the initial impression set up by the image (we expect innocence and restraint, but get sexual innuendo, for example.) An even stronger sense of incongruity between text and image is developed in this surimono (Figure 54), with a dramatic image of the strong boy Kintoki wrestling a giant carp in a waterfall, and the following surprising verse:

<i>Atsumono ni</i>	It's said to make
<i>Naru te iu koi no</i>	A good soup
<i>Odorebaya</i>	This carp that thrashes about
<i>Kaze ni soyogeru</i>	Like the hair of green willows
<i>Aoyagi no kami</i>	Tousled by the wind ⁷⁶²

At first blush, there may seem little connection between the image and its shocking complement, only a carp, vitally alive in the image, cut up and boiled in the verse. The connection between present and past is equally suspect. Kintoki is a legendary figure, and willows a spring image, referring to the moment, but where is their link? In fact, the “glue” that binds these motifs comes from sources entirely outside of the print. First, the image of a carp climbing a waterfall is connected with the growth of healthy young boys, of which Kintoki is the paradigm, so the print may have a private reference as a wish for a member of the group. Next, carp that climb the Longmen rapids of the Yellow River are said to transform to dragons, so this may be a reference to a dragon year (1820).⁷⁶³ But the connection of carp soup and the tangled hair of the willows in the verse relies on a still more abstruse reference, to Section 118 of *Tsurezuregusa*, in which eating carp soup is said to keep one's sidelocks neatly in place. In relation to this motif, the flowing lines of the waterfall in the image parallel the willow strands, while Kintoki's own hair, wild and bristly, suggests

⁷⁶² あつものになるてふ鯉のおとれはや風にそそける青柳の髪.

⁷⁶³ This supposition comes from Mirviss and Carpenter (2000), 82



Figure 54: “Kintoki and Carp.” A *shikishi-ban* surimono for a New Year, c. 1820, with a *kyōka* verse by Shibaen Moritsuna and illustration by Totoya Hokkei. Joanna Schoff Collection.

his need for carp soup. Ultimately, therefore, the classical references in this piece help to resolve the contradiction set up between verse and image, though not without some major twists and leaps along the way that make the final impression the print gives a combination of astute learning and playful good humor.

“Kintoki and Carp” also suggests the manner that surimono texts can at times, albeit fairly rarely, formally integrate with images through the arrangement of calligraphy. Here the extreme verticality of the verse and signature extend like drops of falling water, utilizing a brusque style that captures some of Kintoki’s bravado and verve. This formal union is rather unusual in *kyōka* surimono, however, which tend to segregate the two forms to some extent, fitting text around image on a single plane, though sometimes, especially in later works, creating a separate space for calligraphy in an inset. In terms of style as well, calligraphy more typically aims for a grace and courtly refinement to match the subject, rather than a direct engagement with the specific nature of the image. The production process is of course most noteworthy in this regard, with calligraphy added separately, after the creation of an image. Nevertheless, there are some explicit efforts in isolated *kyōka* surimono to unify text and image formally, as well as thematically. Sometimes spaces are left on elements within the image, a standing screen or scroll, where text is to be inscribed. More dramatically, John Carpenter has introduced a surimono with an image of a woman unraveling a scroll painting and a text that likewise twists and even turns upside down to match the movement of the opening scroll.⁷⁶⁴ In this surimono (Figure 52) for a rat day, likewise, the prominent form of kana chosen for the character *no*, although standard, nevertheless has the visual appearance of a series of rats among the calligraphy. Such calligraphic play, while not the norm, is part of the spirit of inventiveness, driven partly by competition, which dominates on *kyōka* surimono.

⁷⁶⁴ Mirviss and Carpenter (2000), 46 (fig. 4)

If text and image do not typically unite in form, yet clearly interact meaningfully on surimono in the various ways described here, what then is the precise nature of their integration? How is it that these two systems of signification, for so long believed to be antagonistic in their functioning, can conjoin and operate together on these works, with so little sense of incompatibility? Obviously, given the stylistic and formal distinctions between text and image, the means of their unification is thematic and abstract, not material, although both systems are perceived materially, though printed forms, with all the values and implications these physical forms can add. But if their encounters are primarily thematic, on what ground and by what signifying system do they occur? Do images become subordinate to texts in their combination, or texts to images? Or, as I have suggested here, do they maintain independence and equality, with each opened up to some extent by the other, but never succumbing wholly to the other or becoming dependent? Yet if this is correct, how is it that text and image on surimono can manage to retain their identities in these transactions, which would seem to require some sort of negotiation and compromise, some meeting point closer to one or the other signifying system? These are the questions I hope to engage in the next sections, with a closer analysis of the structural functioning of surimono's language.

Verbal Images and Visual Texts, I: The Poetic Basis of Surimono's Illustrations

In presenting an analysis of surimono's language, I feel it necessary first to question certain conventional assumptions about the roles of text and image, which posit each as an independent signifying system with a unique structure of determining meaning, possibly parallel, but never fully integrated. Indeed, in the history of thought in the West, the borders between text and image have been sharply outlined and zealously guarded until quite recently, leading to some of the blind spots of surimono

genre definition I have described in the first chapter. From Plato's separation of text and image as "conventional" and "natural" signs in his *Cratylus*—the former supposedly establishing meaning in reference to an abstract representational system, the latter by direct resemblance to things—through to related renaissance and reformation debates about the varying merits and limitations of poetry and painting⁷⁶⁵, and on to modern philosophers like Suzanne Langer, who would deny the very possibility of the hybrid work,⁷⁶⁶ the arts have been carefully subdivided and the divisions between them continually re-enforced. In practice, on the surface of the picture plane, therefore, text and image have been strictly segregated in the West, seldom allowed to co-exist meaningfully before the twentieth century, while text-image combinations produced in China and Japan have often been received with a remarkable blindness that privileged the visual to the almost complete ignorance of the textual. As W.J.T. Mitchell has described it, the lines drawn between text and image in European history have been emblematic of other stark divisions, with which their boundaries have at various times been identified: culture and nature, male and female, literacy and illiteracy, class distinctions, civilization and primitivism, and even racial segregation.⁷⁶⁷ His attempt to deny any essential difference between text and image based on the inherent natures of these signifying systems thus stands as a challenge to these foundational dichotomies on which so-called Western culture has been constructed.

In dealing with *kyōka* surimono, it is important then to shed the traditional understanding that distinguishes "text" and "image" as different signifying systems. I will do so here specifically by calling into question the identification of texts as exclusively *verbal* and images as exclusively *visual*, using this second set of terms to

⁷⁶⁵ Such as Da Vinci's famous *Paragone: Of Poetry and Painting*.

⁷⁶⁶ *Problems of Art: Ten Philosophical Lectures*. New York, Scribners, 1957.

⁷⁶⁷ Mitchell's classic study is *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*. University of Chicago, 1986.

focus on the manner in which texts and images intersect, overlap and interrelate on these illustrated poetry sheets. By freeing “verbal” and “visual” from their assumed correspondences to “image” and “text” respectively, we can explore the possibilities for the complete integration of the latter pair, which can be accomplished precisely by images becoming “verbal” and/or texts “visual.” I define this second set of terms here according to the distinction between two types of reception or signification described by Nelson Goodman in *Languages of Art*.⁷⁶⁸ The verbal corresponds to a calibrated system in which forms (meaning sounds, letters and words, but also icons and images) relate to one another as a set of differential signifiers, and where the materiality of sound and letter is conventional, of importance only in differentially establishing the elements of that system. Simply put, this means that a form corresponding to the letter “Q” acts *only* as an “Q” within the verbal system, no matter if it’s black or green, sixty feet tall, written elegantly or in a rough scrawl, and that a “stick man” represents the human being in this realm as much as a carefully articulated renaissance study of the human form.⁷⁶⁹ The qualities transmitted visually (or musically, in the case of poetry) by this material, by contrast, are based solely on the materiality of shape and sound, where nuances of lines, rhythms and tones are read not according to an external, calibrated system, but for the significance of their own subtle shades of meaning in relation to one another, experienced emotively, not according to a rationally fixed system of one-to-one correspondence.⁷⁷⁰ Thus stick man and renaissance study may

⁷⁶⁸ *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1976.

⁷⁶⁹ This implies that images function (verbally) not by resemblance, but as differential signifiers. We experience “resemblance” as a residual effect, through our familiarity with the signifiers, just as we may perceive words as “labels” for things. For just as language represents certain divisions of an otherwise undifferentiated reality into naturalized conceptual categories, images separate this material with lines and forms, organizing the world through specific perceptions, based on conventions of representation.

⁷⁷⁰ The question of whether material itself can produce implicit nuances without reference to a differential, external system of signification is debatable, but I believe there is a physical/physiological basis for this argument. Essentially, this relates to the issue of whether a form like music is “naturally intuited” (capable of soothing babies and savage beasts, uninitiated into any structural system) or whether it requires the internalization of an artificial system in order to be “heard.” To some extent, both seem to be true, “hearing” a natural process, but “hearing as music,” a particular type of perception

both lead to the calibrated signification “human being,” for example, but with quite a different perception of values and understanding of the human signified adhering.⁷⁷¹ Now, the obvious advantage of distinguishing “verbal” and “visual” as free terms is that we soon realize that words and pictures can be apprehended according to *either* system. This is a point largely lost to us, for example, in modern typography, which intentionally downplays the visual qualities of texts, generally reducing them to sheer transparency, in order that the verbal mode come to the fore and the text assume a life of its own away from the materiality of ink and paper. But we need only think of handwriting, and especially calligraphy in the Asian context, to be made aware again that texts too are visual, as well as, as becomes most obvious in spoken poetry, musical. Images, likewise, when viewed not for their aesthetic qualities but representational power, become primarily verbal in function.

With these preliminaries in place, let me turn back now to *surimono*. In the most interesting *surimono*, as we have seen, there is an interconnection between the poetry and the picture that fundamentally redefines the meaning of both, so that although text and image in these works could stand alone and function independently, together they produce a layered kind of signification impossible to achieve in either form alone. In this signification process, the roles of text and image as we generally think of them frequently cross. Even leaving aside for the moment the employment of a blatantly visual mode of inscription for poetry in court-style calligraphy, we can see that *kyōka* verse is almost obsessively focused on the *materiality* of language, meaning

in a learned context, requiring training. Likewise, although correlations between colors, patterns, sounds and particular brain wave patterns or moods have been demonstrated through psychological experimentation, the question remains as to how “structured” or “inbuilt” these reactions are.

⁷⁷¹ We cannot merely consider the visual/musical qualities of a signifier then as just a secondary residue, left over by the necessity of its material form in summoning a calibrated signified, but rather as an equal part of the signification process, giving quality, value or emotional context to an otherwise objective and flat signified. In fact, however, it is impossible in reality to have a signified without some shadow of the material form of the signifier, and even the impression of objectivity is so constructed (by the regularity of modern type setting, for example.)

both the multivalency of signifiers that denies linguistic transparency (a single calibration), and the repetition of sounds that calls attention to the physical properties of the signification process itself. Such an emphasis on materiality, in turn, allows for the easy transposition of verses to physical form in the surimono, translating poetic processes to imagery and also to the image's relationship back to the text. Surimono illustrations thus also function according to two modes: they alter from primarily visual at first glance—an appreciation of colors, lines, textures and forms, as well as of subject—to verbal in relation to the poems, becoming primarily units of linguistic representation in the linking process. Or, to put it another way, the penchant of *kyōka* verse for making doubles, utilizing forms that problematize the conventionally assumed one-to-one relationship between signifier and signified, lends the poetry itself to receiving a double, in visual form as illustration. Illustration, then, takes on the spirit and devices of the verses, seeking correspondences with them that are as indirect, shifting and multiple as their own approach to language. *Kyōka* poetry creates doubled meanings linguistically, by utilizing wordplay and pivots (*kakekotoba*); historically, by utilizing lines from classic poems in incongruously modern situations (*honkadori*); figuratively, through the devices of metaphor and metonymy, where one specific object is made to stand for a general concept; and associatively, by forcing a comparison between two unexpectedly related objects or ideas (*mitate*). All of this doubling that occurs within the poetry itself is subsequently extended into another dimension by the interaction of text and image, which gives each of these forms additional contexts of understanding and modes of apprehension.

Although I will have grounds shortly for questioning this assertion in specific cases, it is clear from the outline I have set out here that I believe poetry is the basis for directing signification on surimono, and that images, although receptively primary (in being viewed first), follow its nature and devices in their creation, essentially

giving poetry visual form. This is not to say that illustrations, once determined, are dependent upon texts in the actual *functioning* of a surimono, or that they are somehow incomplete without those texts, only that the illustrations themselves are thoroughly steeped with the spirit of *kyōka*, created in its image. For it is poetry, grounded in the *kyōka* movement and its structures, meetings, clubs and productions, that is the central element of a surimono, its *raison d'être* for the poetic societies, and illustration that comes to meet it, taking on the style, approach and interests of the verses. Of course, in this meeting of forms, neither can retain full authority or purity, and there are cases where *kyōka* verse seems as though applied to rather standard *ukiyo-e* images—particularly in kabuki surimono—rather than summoning a unique kind of imagery for its own purposes, as is in fact most often the case. But even here, the standard *ukiyo-e* image, although recognizable, is transformed with the format, emphases and special printing effects of surimono, which highlight the classicism of the subject. Moreover, even in those cases to be discussed where an illustration, in actual or projected form, seems to have preceded verses in the creation of a work, that illustration is still considered, formed or chosen because it falls within the general principles and interests of *kyōka*, though the specific verses to be related to it may come after. It is partly on this basis that I argue that surimono must be treated as a primarily poetic form in its nature and conception, rather than the artistic movement it is often considered to be.

The poetic basis of surimono imagery is on the surface level so obvious that it can be outlined in the most blunt of fashions, simply by following the transposition of poetic device from verse to illustration. I have given an initial analysis in this direction in the Introduction, treating Shinsai's "landscape" of tea vessels as the visual equivalent of the wordplay that allowed tea and mountain scene to double in the initial verse. Further examples of verse-image doubling can be found that correspond to

each of the types mentioned in the list above. In this 1813 still life of a lacquer dish with seafood and a glass goblet, for example (Figure 55), the image relates to the verse by pun as well as thematically. The *kyōka*, full of wordplay, requires two translations to capture its layers:

<i>Iroiro no</i>	Various	Having brought together
<i>Tori atsumarishi</i>	Birds gather	Various things
<i>Sakana tote</i>	Taking fish	For the side dishes
<i>Momosaezuri no</i>	A chirping	The spring drinking party
<i>Haru no sakamori</i>	Spring feast	Is all atwitter ⁷⁷²

The image may at first seem to be a literal depiction of the spring banquet described in the poem, but this is only one level of signification. The poem in fact plays with the words *tori-atsumaru* (“birds gather” but also the verb phrase “bring together”) and *sakana* (“fish” but also “a dish to be served with wine”), giving two layers of imagery, with the feast of man shadowed by that of animals. This wordplay is visually transferred to imagery in the side dish (*sakana*) of fish (*sakana*), which has a pattern reminiscent of bird’s tracks around its sides. The image here operates only on a single level—that of the human feast—so is not itself a visual *kakekotoba*, yet its elements carefully echo and incorporate the puns in the poem, precisely though verbal functioning (the dish as the signifier *sakana*), or one might say, as linguistic puns embedded in imagery.

A somewhat unusual form of visual *kakekotoba*, close in some ways to the hidden calendar symbols that served as one of the foundations of *kyōka* surimono, can be seen in this image of local products of Arima (a place name that means literally “there is a horse”) for the *Uma-zukushi* series illustrated by Hokusai (Figure 56). Here, the arrangement of objects subtly creates the impression of a horse’s head, with the line of the *yatate*—overlapped with a rein-like rope—suggesting the curve of a

⁷⁷² 色ゝのとりあつまりしさかなとて百轉の春の酒盛.



Figure 55: "A Feast." A *kokonotsugiri-ban* surimono for the New Year of 1813, with *kyōka* verse by Suzuki Kokebito and illustration by Totoya Hokkei. Spencer Museum of Art.



Figure 56: *Arima* (有馬) from the series *All About Horses* (馬尽). A *shikishi-ban* surimono for the New Year of 1822, with *kyōka* verse by Chikushien Itoori and illustration by Katsushika Hokusai. Joanna Schoff Collection.

horse's face, the crossed brushes at the mouth area a fancy bit, and the pattern on the cloth above it a decorative braided mane. As with the tea vessel landscape that we viewed in the Introduction (Figure 1), this shadow or “double” form is not immediately obvious, but undeniably there once seen. In this case, the image freely picks up on the spirit and general devices of *kyōka*, rather than any actual *kakekotoba* on horse in the poem, splitting the reference to Arima (intended as this surimono's subtle connection to the “All About Horses” series theme) into its two components, actual place in the local products, and embedded signification in the hidden outline of the horse. Once again, the verbal component structures the image, which would not signify in the same manner without reference to the calibrated system of language, albeit here following the two prongs of a single signifier.

Doubling in surimono is not only linguistic, but also chronological, in the layering of past and present significations upon one another. At the poetic level, this is most obvious in *honkadori*, or allusive variation, the quoting of a part of a classic poem in a new context. The translation of *honkadori* to visual form, like the uses of *kakekotoba*, can range from the general—the use of classical motifs or elements in a context that re-identifies them—to the very specific, an actual quotation of classic visual sources. In the general sense, a large proportion of *kyōka* surimono partake of *honkadori* to some degree, redefining present day forms through references to the past. But there are quite specific applications of *honkadori* visually in surimono as well, with illustrations quoting allusively from past styles and classic works, as obvious as remakes of early *ukiyo-e* by Moronobu and Torii School artists, bearing their signatures, to less recognized borrowings from the classical past. This image from an 1820 surimono (Figure 57), for example, has forms and layout closely resembling a *yamato-e* illustration from the 12th century *Heike no kyo* (figure 58), the



Figure 57: “Rising Sun and Waves.” A *kokonotsugiri-ban* surimono for a New Year, c. 1820, illustration by Harunobu Gakutei. Joanna Schoff Collection.

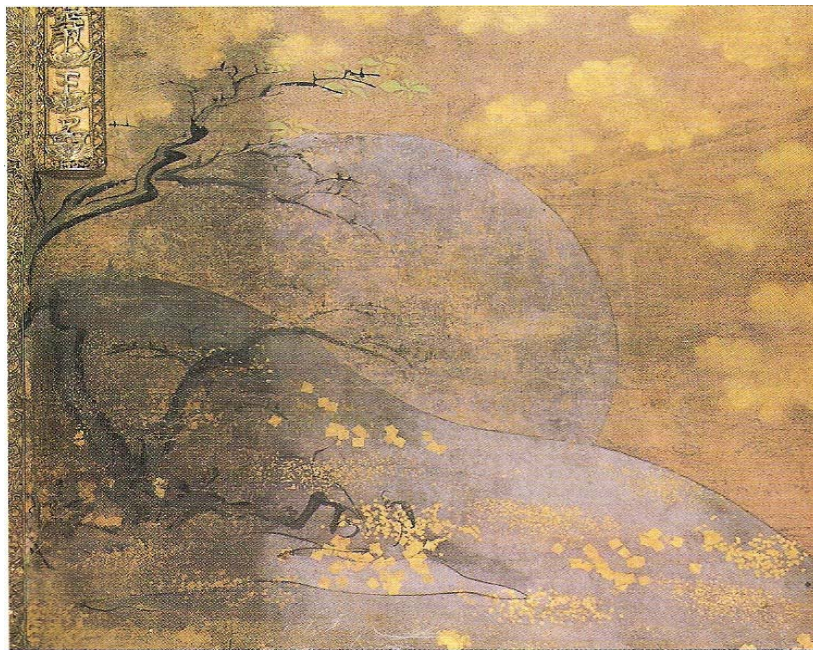


Figure 58: Cover of Chapter 27 of the *Sutras Dedicated by the Heike* (平家納経), 1164. Itsukushima Shrine.

image merely inverted, with substitutions for objects, but the same basic forms. Once again, this rummaging of the past for imagery is in fact diametrically opposed to the typical definition of *ukiyo-e* as a kind of painting obsessively focused on the immediate present and the current fashions of style, though entirely in keeping with the literary methods of *kyōka*, which also mined the past for its material.

Metonymy, like *honkadori*, is one of the most frequently employed devices in surimono imagery, and also often directed at the classical past, with an element extracted from an old tale or historical incident standing in for a person, chapter or event. These transactions begin in poetry, but become yet more pronounced in images, with the Shichifukujin physically represented by their attributes (a bag for Hotei, a bream for Ebisu), General Kong Ming by a fan of peacock feathers, a *shirabyoshi* dancer by a drum and court cap, a section of *Tsurezuregusa* by a radish. By being one step removed from the implied reference, these figures allow silent objects to speak for the human realm, giving these otherwise heavy-handed classical sources subtlety, indirectness and wit in their employment. Like the multiple significations of *kyōka* verse, moreover, metonymic processes are often made to serve double duty. The treasure chest in the “Sparrow Shell” surimono, for example, is both a reference to the “Tongue-Cut Sparrow” and to the Treasure Ship of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune, whose magical implements it contains. Metonymy, which maintains and even emphasizes the materiality of the figural object, is vastly privileged over metaphor in both *kyōka* and its surimono, for metaphor requires certain posited depths, a grounded, central meaning that lessens the power of the object and fixes the importance of the reference outside of it, not merely a transfer from part to whole. The main metaphoric processes in surimono are located in relation to the auspicious significations of the New Year, typically rote, such as pine and bamboo for strength and perseverance, cranes and tortoises for long life, singing warblers for joy, while the

truly creative aspects of these prints are reserved for metonymy and other forms of signification that utilize more concrete doubling.

Perhaps the most creative form of “doubling” involves the unusual mental associations made between objects by the process of *mitate*, “comparison.” As mentioned, *mitate* should strictly speaking be distinguished from mere chronological comparisons, such as a contemporary figure as a stand-in for a classical situation, although such *yatsushi* do share a common principle with *mitate*. As the surprising unity found between two wholly distinct categories of reference, however, *mitate* is more than just the comparison of one human life to another, and in a general sense can be seen to comprise, in fact, much of the riddle qualities of *surimono*.⁷⁷³ An example of this literary technique can be seen in this image of a butterfly resting on a Western microscope (Figure 59), illustrating the following verse:

<i>Me no sameta</i>	I seem to be awake
<i>Yō naru hana no</i>	But these butterflies
<i>Na ni asobu</i>	Playing in the flourishing
<i>Chō wa ōkata</i>	Mustard flowers
<i>Namayoi no yume</i>	Must be a drunken dream ⁷⁷⁴

The elements of this poem—butterfly, dream, awake—allude to the story of Zhuang-zu’s vivid dream of being a butterfly, from which he wakes to wonder if he is not in fact truly a butterfly, now dreaming itself a man. The poem lightly connects this elegant confusion to the effects of alcohol, a conventional poetic trope, but Hokusai, focusing in on the theme of ontological doubt, applies it more dramatically to the introduction of Western scientific equipment, which presents a strange vision of the world as unsettling as Zhuang-zu’s. A decorative image of a beautiful natural organism and a rare imported object thus becomes the locus for an interrogation of the

⁷⁷³ *Mitate* is essentially the answer to an unstated, riddle-like question: “How is X like Y?” or “What do X and Y have in common?”

⁷⁷⁴ めのさめたやうなる花の菜に遊ぶ蝶は大なた生酔の夢.



Figure 59: "Butterfly and Microscope." A *tate-kokonotsugiri-ban* surimono for a New Year, c. 1800-1805, with *kyōka* verse by Senraien Nagaki and illustration by Katsushika Hokusai. Spencer Museum of Art.

nature of being and knowing, when poem and image are combined. It is noteworthy in this transaction that the visual qualities of the image, texture, line and color— attractive though they may be—are of far less importance than the verbal elements “microscope” and “butterfly” they signify, which combine with the elements “eye-opening,” “butterfly” and “dream” in the poem to suggest the ancient story of Zhuang-zu and connect it, through *mitate*, with modern Western science.

The sort of movement from text to image we see in “Butterfly and Microscope” implies that illustration can be not only a mirror to the verses, reflecting their essence, but also an associative link, in a manner related to the practice of linked verse (*renga*), especially the freer *renku* of *haikai* practice. In some surimono, images function like an appended *tsukeku*, understanding the poetic implications of what has come before, and moving these along, with loose, associative connections (Bashō called these *nioi* links), rather than mere repetition of their content. Similarly, there is much play with physical forms in surimono, where an element in a verse may take a parallel shape in an image, or vice-versa (waterfall lines for hair or willow strands, for example, or a soot encrusted scraper for a crow feather in another piece.) Or, in a related manner, a surimono illustration may seem to pick up on a word or two from the original verses, finding a new context for them. In this surimono (Figure 60) with an image of the iconic “Wisteria Maiden,” a standard subject in Ōtsu-e (folk pictures from Ōtsu, another example of visual quotation), the poems make no direct reference to her, though there are mentions of wisteria, flowing like the long sleeves of a maiden’s kimono, and of a lacquered parasol (or hat), paralleling the position of the branch of wisteria she habitually carries (or her headgear). The *engo* (related words) of classical verse (and *kyōka*) also help to shape the transition from text to image, with mention of plum in verses receiving a warbler in illustration, to provide a basic example. Surimono, in fact, over time developed their own unique codes of



Figure 60: From the series *Three Hats* (三笠合の内). A *shikishi-ban* surimono for a New Year, c. 1820, with *kyōka* verses by Daotsutei Soremade and Karindō and illustration by Shōtei Hokuju. Chester Beatty Library.

relation, with particular zodiac signs taking set subject matter. Sheep years, for example, often made reference to the Taoist immortal Huang Chuping, whose ability to change goats to stone and back again with a touch of his staff in turn summoned the custom of striking a woman with the wooden ladle used for the seven herb gruel to ensure her fertility in the coming year. The latter practice itself, then, could be used for a sheep year, without any direct reference to the original legend. The language of surimono, text and image, thus develops as a series of associative links.

To some extent, however, we must question the impression of wise mastery and cool associations presented in surimono, which relies on an assumed movement from poetry to image in their creation, and not vice-versa, or simultaneous conception. Although I have thus far taken for granted poetry's precedence over image in the creation of a surimono, it is time to interrogate this assumption. In the "Wisteria Maiden" piece above, for example, the fact that the pictorial (or at least thematic) reference was clearly in place before the verses, although the text-image relationship gives an impression of only a loose, associative connection, is apparent in the title of the print "A Comparison of Three Hats" (*Sankasa awase no uchi*). Clearly then, the poets had precisely determined their material in advance, selecting three iconic hat-wearing figures from tradition as their theme for a series, but then made only oblique references to the Wisteria Maiden motif in their verses here, allowing the image to appear as a witty, masterful cap on the suggestions of the poetry. In this case, there is little need to engage the tricky, chicken-and-the-egg problem concerning the precedence of text or image, as the iconic reference here *is* an image. But in other works, in which text and image relate not only to a standard external referent, but also to each other, the question is relevant. Although it is still a fair assumption that poetry preceded illustration on most surimono, as in the "tea ceremony" work I have

frequently referred to, where the clever doubling of the image almost certainly follows that of the poetry, not vice-versa, other works do have elements that suggest the opposite orientation. When the poems in a surimono refer to the precise details or configuration of an image, not simply its central motif, we must question the usual assumption of textual priority. In this surimono with an illustration of a live rooster confronting a rooster in a painting (Figure 61), just one of the many visual “doubles” that populate surimono imagery, two of the three poems explicitly refer to the rooster’s mistaken attack, making it certain that the image, either in actual or projected form, preceded the poetry. We must therefore consider surimono not only as a linking of picture to text, though this is often the case, but also as a full conception worked out in advance, in which poetry can link to and set up the pictorial input. To continue the comparison to linked verse, this would essentially be creating a *maeku* with the *tsukeku* to follow already in mind, working a perfect fit from both ends.

Finally, although the examples given above have been chosen for the ease of isolating particular means of signification—which I have described as transferring from verse to imagery—in actuality, surimono prints often employ two or more of these related techniques of doubling and linking simultaneously, with influence on texts from images as well. For example, the most commonly encountered variation of visual “*mitate*,” the *yatsushi-e* that melds a modern figure or object with a classical model, often occurs as an associative link of image to text that cleverly connects a long established reference with its latter day form. This Hokuba illustration (Figure 62), which also stands as a good example of “visual *honkadori*,” is an example of this kind of chronological doubling. Hokuba depicts the line “to burn fine incense and sleep alone” from one of the lists in the Pillow Book, but with the role of Sei Shonagon here played by a courtesan drawn in the late 17th century style of Moronobu. The result is not a sense of incongruity or clash, as in the satirical use of



Figure 61: “A Rooster Threatening a Painted Rooster.” A *shikishi-ban* surimono for the New Year of 1825, with *kyōka* verses by Senzenkan Momozane, Yayoian Hinamaru and Yomo Magao and illustration by Totoya Hokkei. Chester Beatty Library.



Figure 62: *Things that Make the Heart Beat Faster* (心ときめきするもの) from the series *The Pillow Book* (枕草子). A *shikishi-ban* surimono for a New Year, c. late 1810s, with *kyōka* verses by Kokinro Nagayado, Sono no Muratake and Senteian Ryūkai and illustration by Hokuba. Spencer Museum of Art.

yatsushi in contemporaneous commercial *ukiyo-e*, but rather one of continuation or revival, with the courtesan naturally filling the role and experiencing the same feelings Sei Shonagon described close to a millennium before. The poems, likewise, focus on the contemporary New Year, with only loose references to falling sleep recalling the line from the Pillow Book that appears as the inspiration for the print. The piece, therefore, in the shift from canonical quotation to poetry and image, comes to be not about the past and the classical reference itself, but rather about how this classical past imbues the forms of the Tokugawa world with meaning.

Through this rapidly presented series of examples, I have attempted to suggest how the usual process of translating poetry to image in surimono takes place not only according to the thematic content of the poetry, but also in regard to its particular devices and methods of signification, which are often transferred directly to illustrations. Sometimes these signifying methods rely initially on the visual functions of the illustrations, forms that could be seen as two distinct subjects (visual *kakekotoba*), such as tea utensils and mountain scene, that bear a punning relationship of resemblance to an element mentioned in a verse (visual *jiguchi*), or that quote from a well-known painting or print (visual *honkadori*). At others, the verbal functioning of the image comes immediately to the fore, in which the shape or outlines of the represented object are of less importance than the word, the placeholder in language and thought, associated with it. The form of Hokusai's microscope and the colors of the butterfly he chose to depict are merely decorative additions in regard to the functioning of the image in relation to the text, to summon the parable of Zhuang-zu and give it a surprising but revealing material form, while the visual presentation of the pun on fish and side dish in Hokkei's illustration actually relies on an overlap in the realm of verbal signifiers. Verbal and visual, this analysis reveals, are not properties of text and image respectively, but methods of reception, one more

materially based, the other moving through material differentially to reference an abstract system, but both inherent in surimono poetry and its illustration. Moreover, by showing how the linguistic devices in poetry are transferable to the level of image, we can see that text and image are not separate systems of signification, but overlap and are integrated within these processes of reception, through which both are necessarily apprehended.

Ultimately, however, we must draw a sharp distinction between the verbal and visual characteristics of surimono texts and images in the signifying process, for each of these has quite different properties and effects. Specifically, I would like to distinguish two processes in surimono text-image integration, referring to them as mirrors and links. The process of *linking* in surimono is primarily verbal, occurring in relation to a calibrated system, in reference to which text and image operate as layered signifiers, typically supplying allusions to both a standard form taken from the past and to its present day variant. The visual functions of imagery and text, by contrast, stop at the primary level of *mirroring*, translating the stylistic qualities and devices from one medium to another, but not carrying them further along than a message of complete integration in terms of their lyrical codes. The difference between them—for linking through doubles must also be seen as a kind of mirroring—is thus one of movement: mirroring ceases when it finds its complementary image, but linking, although sometimes stopping there as well, has the potential to continue on, taking the signifying process through subsequent stages. For of course the calibrations of the system, the so-called signifieds, are themselves nothing but further signifiers, allowing meaning to slip along a network of links, from woman and stone mountain to Lady Murasaki and Ishiyama Temple, but also to Huang Chuping and goat, and from each of these to yet further connections, New Year's purple mist and zodiac sign for example, as well as sexual allusions, the terms of which bring in yet other signifiers

(Tsukuba with its *renga* associations, Wagōjin with connection to Hokusai's 1821 erotic album etc.) In these verbal transactions, text and image fuse as inseparable parts, becoming more than just an application of poetic technique to picture, which, fascinating as it is for revealing the deep impression poetry makes on its illustration, still posits text and image as parallel but not yet fully integrated systems. In a work like "Butterfly and Microscope," however, text and image absolutely cannot do without one another in the process of signification, verbally interacting to reach another level than text or image individually presents. Without the poem, Hokusai's image would be too distant from Zhuang-zu's parable for certain connection, while without the image, the poem would remain at the level of a light, contemporary utilization of the story. Together, however, their impact is powerful, far greater than the sum of their individual parts. It is this sort of integration and mutual dependency, as link, that makes the text-image language of *kyōka* surimono unique in this genre.

Verbal Images and Visual Texts, II: Signification Systems and Cultural Icons

In the previous section, I made a rough differentiation between those surimono that merely represent poetry in their illustrations, either in themes or techniques (mirrors), and those that integrate text and image to create a new level of signification, not merely repeating the content of the poems but taking it in an expanded direction (links). By way of refinement, this distinction needs to be treated as a range rather than an either-or, for the addition of illustration necessarily leads to amplification and new "handles" for signification. In Shinsai's illustration of tea implements, for example, the visual *kakekotoba* does not just repeat the signification process and content of the initial verse, but adds to it, completing both scenes (tea ceremony and landscape) visually, bringing in the second verse through related elements, and making references to the New Year of 1822 with the decorative motifs on the utensils. This

integration of verses and summation of content also relies on text-image interplay, though notably here it is primarily the verses that alter our view of the illustration, with the implied shadow of mountain scene only taking shape after the first poem is read. We can equate this second scale, the relatively stability in the signification of verses, with the first, of images as ranging from reflection of content (stable poems) to links that transform them. But in either case, the significant aspect of text-image relations in surimono is the degree of integration, no matter which element is most significantly transformed thereby. In these negotiations, it is essential that text and image not only maintain separate identities, but also fuse as intertwined and inseparable, becoming equal elements in reference to a calibrated signification system.

Full integration of text and image into a single language in surimono in fact explicitly relies on reference to such a system, external to the work itself, but providing the glue through which its verses and pictures are connected as more than just reflections of one another. The calibrations of this external structure include not only words and their related concepts, but also the elements of cultural knowledge, celebrated works, ideas, acts and heroes of the past to which texts and images relate. For, as mentioned, the calibrations within this system are not isolated, but rather organized as a network of signifiers, so that a particular combination of calibrated references will also light up the spaces between them, and these then others, and so on, linking the different components of this structure precisely through all of the devices and methods described in the previous section. Let me use a concrete example for explanation here, rather than relying on such abstract language. This surimono (Figure 64), with illustration by Shinsai, depicts a courtesan, apparently resting for a moment while removing a fan from its alcove hanging, though the third poem suggests that she may be caught up in a moment of aesthetic rapture. Leaning on the hooked pole with the fan still attached to its end, she suddenly becomes—through what might

be called *mitate*, or even visual *honkadōri*—a mirror image of the warrior in the painting displayed in the alcove behind her. For the figure in the painting is the iconic Chinese hero Ma Chao (Bachō), one of the five “Tiger Generals” from the Romance of the Three Kingdoms (*Sangokushi*), leaning on his ax. The woman, simply by assuming this position, however contrived, becomes no longer a mere courtesan, but in that frozen moment of the image an eternal equivalent to the hero, taking on whatever qualities are his. The past, as paradigm, and the present, as contingent moment, fuse in this instant in the timeless space of the image, in which the paradigm pours its qualities into this contemporary vessel. This fusion is quite different therefore than the *ukiyo-e kyōdai-e* (“brother picture”), in which the hero would typically be feminized and trivialized by association with a woman of pleasure performing a domestic chore.

This point of view is supported by the poems on the print, which in no way ridicule the warrior, but rather make him, albeit allusively, a centerpiece for composition. The verses read:

<i>Itadakishi</i>	In the color
<i>Kabuto no iro ni</i>	Of the gift helmet
<i>Niibuki no</i>	The golden flowers
<i>Kogane hana saku</i>	Of mountain roses bloom
<i>Tamagawa no kishi</i>	Banks of the Jewel River ⁷⁷⁵

<i>Azusa yumi</i>	Drawing strings
<i>Haru no yakō no</i>	For the catalpa bow spring night
<i>Hiku koto wo</i>	Lottery, we let our arrows fly
<i>Hanaseba chōdo</i>	And just in their wake
<i>Kaoru umekaze</i>	A fragrant plum breeze ⁷⁷⁶

⁷⁷⁵ いたゞきし兜の色にに吹のかね花さく玉川の岸. The focus on the “tiger color” in this verse structures the image, with its parallel yellows in the helmet and hairpins. The mentions of gold and jewels made this auspicious for the New Year as well.

⁷⁷⁶ 梓弓はるの夜講の引ことをはなせはちやうと薫るうめ風. This complex verse operates on two levels, that of a midnight New Year lottery drawing and that of the conventional catalpa bow epithet (with *haru* meaning “spring” and “stretch [the bow]”). In relation to the latter, we have an embedded *ya no hiku koto* (“shooting arrows”) and *hanaseba* (“when [the arrow is] released”). There does not seem to be any direct relation between this verse and the image, though the “night lottery” may have had connection to the Yoshiwara.



Figure 63: “Courtesan and Tiger General.” A *tate-kokonotsugirii-ban* surimono for the New Year of 1806, with *kyōka* verses by Kashintei Kaneoki, Jūniken Uranari, and Shushintei, and illustration by Ryūryūko Shinsai. Joanna Schoff Collection.

<i>Azusa yumi</i>	Drawing strings
<i>Haru no yakō no</i>	For the catalpa bow spring night
<i>Hiku koto wo</i>	Lottery, we let our arrows fly
<i>Hanaseba chōdo</i>	And just in their wake
<i>Kaoru umekaze</i>	A fragrant plum breeze ⁷⁷⁷
<i>Saku ume ka</i>	Is it the blooming plums?
<i>Kahoku no hana ka</i>	The flowers north of the Yellow River?
<i>Koremo mata</i>	Or yet again
<i>Kin-i kōshi no</i>	The voice of
<i>Ōchō no koe</i>	The brocade prince's nightingale? ⁷⁷⁸

When we examine the language of this print, the manner in which its images and texts operate together to create various connections and meanings, we discover that surimono rely to a massive extent on external elements, a structure of knowledge not immediately present in the texts and images themselves, but which can be accessed by them referentially. The image, in short, is often just a hint, asking the viewer to read through its shorthand references to find the structures of cultural knowledge towering behind, with poems providing clues to direct and affirm this reading. There are no labels here, for example, to relate who the characters are and what the themes of the piece may be. Rather, it is expected that the viewer will be familiar with certain conventions (calibrations), and have certain pieces of knowledge available to make links that are only suggested. We can suspect that we are looking at Ma Chao and a courtesan by their familiar attributes, the famous tiger general's beard, ax and helmet, the woman's obi tied in front, assumptions confirmed additional references in the poetry. Following such positive identification, reading and interpretation begins. In the contemporary setting, "tiger" would be noted to match

⁷⁷⁷ 梓弓はるの夜講の引ことをはなせはちやうと薫るうめ風. This complex verse operates on two levels, that of a midnight New Year lottery drawing and that of the conventional catalpa bow epithet (with *haru* meaning "spring" and "stretch [the bow]"). In relation to the latter, we have an embedded *ya no hiku koto* ("shooting arrows") and *hanaseba* ("when [the arrow is] released"). There does not seem to be any direct relation between this verse and the image, though the "night lottery" may have had connection to the Yoshiwara.

⁷⁷⁸ さく梅か河北の花かこれもまた錦衣公子の黄鳥の声. This verse, which transports the setting to China, makes reference to the Romance of the Three Kingdoms, thus allowing for the Tiger General connection.

the zodiac sign of the year (1806), and courtesan a popular “spring” subject. Visually, we are told to expect a comparison between them, based on the parallel positions of the figures. The first verse offers a point of meeting in the yellow-gold color, matching the helmet and ax handle of the hero, the courtesan’s hair decorations and pole in the image, as well as a tiger’s skin. But in the verse, yellow gives rise to different connections, relying on yet other knowledge. The helmet is linked here to *yamabuki*, the golden flowers associated with one of the *Mu-Tamagawa*, the standard theme of the “Six Jewel Rivers.” The reader is expected to know that the *Nose Tamagawa* is famous for its *yamabuki*, and so make this link. “Tamagawa,” in turn, opens up a new space for allusion, again based entirely on external knowledge. The open-minded viewer may move from here to the Tama House of the Yoshiwara, or the famous courtesan name Tamagawa, as well as the association of *tama* (jewel) with the New Year, again linking general, courtesan and the season.⁷⁷⁹ Meanwhile, we also understand in the context of this holiday that the courtesan is likely replacing the hanging in the alcove as a year-end cleaning. Returning to the physical facts of the image, the connection of *yamabuki* flowers and the helmet in the first poem direct attention to the golden helmet in the print, and we also notice that the General is depicted resting beside a river, in style exactly like the gently winding Tamagawa in *ukiyo-e*. The legendary Chinese hero has thus entered the contemporary Japanese world, and in the third poem, the courtesan is transported back to a historically important river area in China—though perhaps only in imagination as she pauses in thought before the painting. These crossovers further accentuate the mirroring effect of the illustration.

⁷⁷⁹ As in the phrase “Shintama no otoshi” (“the new jewel of the year”), or in reference to the treasures of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune. Jewels also summoned ancient (*magatama*) and classical (as in the Imperial regalia) images.

The surimono thus establishes itself, in the mind of the intimates who have understood it, as standing between two poles of calibrated reference, each with a network of associations, the classic world of the Three Kingdoms romance and the contemporary floating world. These “worlds,” established and known outside of the print, then structure its content through both internal and cross-referencing. Mention of *Nose Tamagawa*, for example, elicits a corresponding Chinese river, which we find in the third verse, notably the Yellow River (*Kōga*), brought out indirectly through the term *kahoku* (“north of the [Yellow] River”). This returns us again to the theme of yellow, also touched upon in the *ōchō* (“nightingale,” literally “yellow bird”) of this verse, which draws attention to the featherlike decorations of the same color on the hero’s helmet.⁷⁸⁰ The ornate language of this verse, with its mention of the “brocade prince” as well, summons up the world of the Three Kingdoms, balancing the contemporary *ukiyo* night lottery⁷⁸¹ references of the second poem, which are nevertheless shadowed with martial imagery. We can see thus that these poles of reference by which the surimono functions are given very concrete forms, creating surprising new connections and transfers between two otherwise distinct elements, represented by the courtesan and the general, meeting and uniting across time and space according to thematic linking points in word and image. But the routes by which these associations travel, the transmitters connecting one synapse to another, rely almost entirely on outside material, an external structure of knowledge. The familiarity needed to direct the viewer through this maze of allusions implies that the surimono was intended for a very specific audience, with certain kinds of interests and certain patterns of expectations for these prints. Here, the viewer is posited as one

⁷⁸⁰ This could also be taken as a literal depiction of a Chinese idiom that appears numerous times in Sangokushi, “giving a tiger wings.”

⁷⁸¹ The “night lottery,” about which there are few direct references, seems to have been a practice wherein a group of lower income men pooled their funds to allow one of their members (the winner of the drawing) a night with a ranked courtesan.

trained by *ukiyo-e*, with its *Mu-Tamagawa* imagery, courtesan critiques (the celebrated Tamagawa), and frequent comparisons of Japanese to Chinese figures (*wakan awase*), as well as by readings in Chinese history and fiction (*Sangokushi*). Without these signposts of established literary and artistic forms to guide interpretation, this print would have no depth or ability to circulate meaning.

It is also worth noting here how hollow—hard surfaced and lacking in content—these linking significations actually are. The connection pointed out between the general and the courtesan is not their resolute nature, their wisdom, fortitude or any such essential attribute. Rather, the link in the image is their posture, and in the verses, primarily the color yellow, an indirect reference relying on a string of others (yellow to helmet/tiger/river to Ma Chao; yellow to *yamabuki* to Tamagawa to courtesan of that name). As flimsy and far-fetched as this chain of signifiers may seem, by drawing a definite connection between the two figures through its explicit utilization, the link becomes impossible to deny. But the chain of reference does not simply end there, with this superimposition, moving on to connect courtesan to the night lottery, and Ma Chao to this through puns on bow and arrow, while the third verse gives a potentially new reading of the image as a moment of internalized rapture, based on memories of elements from the *Sangokushi*, with fresh ties to the motifs already employed. *Kyōka* surimono, in short, intentionally utilize the system of signification not to stabilize meaning, to provide a neat fit to a familiar, calibrated concept where meaning can rest, but rather purposefully to destabilize it, by forcing attention to the materiality and multiplicity of signifiers. It does so through all of the devices I have described in the previous section, but also through the layering of poems, and of illustration onto poetry, which prods at amorphous meaning and forces it to move along, reshaping it with changing contexts. To maintain such movement, these surimono cannot be excessively concerned about the content or depth meaning

of any given element, which would slow down or stop the chain of references (“Butterfly and Microscope” is something of a rare exception in this regard) but rather remain focused on the superficial level, the surface characteristics of the element, from the signifier used to reference it (which gives puns and bridges) to its appearance, components and related elements, all of which provide new signifiers for play, with links to yet others. Generally speaking, however, there do tend to be two major poles in any given *kyōka* surimono, typically representing past and present, between which the play of signifiers takes place, filling the differential space they create with a network of connections.

This kind of play with signifiers to reference and summon up various highlights of the past—celebrated figures, works and events—in order to connect them to the forms of the present configuration, represents a certain attitude towards tradition, creativity and the contemporary world, as well as the status of the players in regard to each of them. First, there is an implicit belief in this practice that the past is the golden repository of meaning, and that one need only touch upon one of its elements to open up its magical store of implications. There is no need, for example, to explore the meaning of the tiger general, simply mentioning him and connecting him to the present configuration is enough to cast his celebrated aura over its structures. For this reason, *kyōka* surimono frequently takes the “double,” either in image alone or in text-image interaction, as its prototypical posture, with the past configuration mirrored by that of the present (woman and Taoist immortal, Danjūrō IV and VII, Zhuang-zu’s dream and Western microscope). Yet the very requirement to utilize the past in this way suggests that the present by itself is felt to be inadequate, not sufficient as the sole focus or source of meaning. It is here that *kyōka* surimono differ in spirit from the commercial *ukiyo-e* contemporaneous with it, for whereas the latter treats actors and courtesans as cultural heroes in their own right, with little need

to shadow them with history to assert their importance, for surimono the present configuration is flat without the added dimension of the past. This use of the past reveals its idealization as perfect model and structure, but also, implicitly, an underlying perception of the poverty of the present, which is only overcome (and triumphantly so) by showing that the present is nothing but the past refigured. Creativity in the present moment therefore requires the employment of the past, and takes place precisely through its structures. Again, in this configuration the past towers over the present as the locus of meaning, as though everything worth saying or doing has already been performed and established as cultural icon, so that all one can do now (and all that one need do now) is to reference these gradations of thought, activity and experience, in which every possibility has been played out, arranging them in interesting and revealing ways. The past, in short, stands as the repository of everything that we need to know, and offers the elements and structure necessary for supplying significance to the present.

Both the material of surimono, based on the highlights of the classical past, and the orientation of its use, to give meaning to the contingent present, are closely related to intellectual movements in the Tokugawa Period, particularly certain *kangaku* (Chinese learning) and *kokugaku* (native learning) systems, the fruits of which were made available through the commercial employment of woodblock print technology. Textual studies and commentaries, of course, have an extensive history in Japan, but these movements added a particular, quasi-religious connotation to the study of old sources. Ogyū Sorai's *komonjigi* movement, one of many approaches to *kangaku*, sought to establish ultimate authority and truth in the ancient age of the sages, which had been perverted through the wear of historical time, thus leading to progressive misinterpretations. One could reestablish this perfect age, however, through its study, clarification and reenactment in ritual, particularly by utilizing the language of the past

in oral form, reading its texts aloud. This structure was subsequently borrowed, albeit with some variations, by Motoori Norinaga, to give religious importance to *kokugaku* and its clarification of the Japanese past, which could be enacted through *monogatari* study and poetry composition. These movements thus not only created a structure whereby employment of the past was essential to the creation of meaning in modern times, but also produced a great deal of precise knowledge about their areas of focus, which according to their belief in its universal importance, was not jealously guarded, but widely reproduced and disseminated in lectures and book form. In terms of social relations, moreover, these movements bypassed the traditional structure whereby knowledge was built on an accretion of previous interpretations, with respect for an idea based on the social position of the interpreter, for a direct appeal to the authority of the past itself, as found in ancient texts. By mobilizing this past, thus, one could experience and understand truth directly, bringing its profound structures to life in the present.

Yet while references to the structures of the past in surimono may have been founded on their serious study and analysis in these movements, its particular employment of such references was often extremely cavalier, apparently more concerned for the image-making power of the source than its content. The very superficiality of this usage has multiple and deep reaching implications in regard to the commissioners of surimono, their position and identity in society, and their construction of a field of culture. First, we can certainly read into this utilization of the structures of knowledge the proud stance of surimono's commissioners, who wished to display themselves as people of high learning and intellect, and in many cases truly were—there being a significant overlap between intellectual societies and

kyōka groups⁷⁸²—although in others knowledge was likely as superficial as the utilization of it. The very cavalier attitude with which the designer skirted across the surface of classic texts and their elements, however, as though they were all well known and required no further commentary, itself gave an impression of mastery. One did not need to be intimately familiar with The Tale of Genji, however, to make punning references to a few of its central characters, its author or the apocryphal circumstances of its composition, and link these to other signifying structures of past and present. Yet these links nonetheless summoned up the vaunted status of these works, and their content for those who knew it, lending their properties to the *surimono*. Not all classical allusions were quite so pedantic, as in the *Tsurezuregusa* and *Makura no sōshi* references we have seen, which utilized exact lines from these works, implying at least some awareness of and concern for content, even if superficially employed. But it is noteworthy that these miscellanies, with their short, memorable sections and lists, were the most favored for such internal references in *kyōka* *surimono*, while most other texts received much looser treatment. Additionally, the understatement of these references, as in “Kintoki and Carp,” which assumes that the viewer will be familiar enough with *Tsurezuregusa* as gospel to catch the required connection of carp soup and unruly hair, implicitly posited knowledge of classical sources as the very basis for understanding and communication. To capture the reference implied that giver and receiver were equally adept in the structures of classical culture, and thus shared knowledge, interests, ways of thinking, and to some extent thus even identities. Such implicit, bonding communications were most powerfully shaped precisely by keeping the references external to the work itself, not

⁷⁸² Other than Ōta Nampo, who left the *kyōka* world soon after the emergence of *kyōka* *surimono*, the best known of the scholars who participated as leaders in the *surimono* movement were Ishikawa Masamochi (Yadaya Meshimori, Rokujuen) and Morishima Chūryō (Manzōtei Shinra), each of whom authored works of historical fiction as well as critical studies. In addition, several illustrators were trained by *kokugakusha*, including Shunman and Gakutei, who were also appreciated as poets.

identifying scenes or allusions with a title for example, but relying on the viewer to catch the intended implication.

Although the superficial associative processes of surimono could certainly be called pedantic, making an artificial display of learning and breadth of knowledge, rather than any concentrated study of content and essence, there is something more happening in the early nineteenth century surimono's construction of culture that requires closer examination. On the one hand, we could characterize these utilizations of the celebrated highlights of the past for their signifying power as a kind of commodification, in which cultural elements are reduced to self-reflecting symbols, employed mainly to reveal the depth and qualities of the user, rather than for their own value. The focus on the past that implicitly denies the significance of the present by itself is parallel to a configuration that requires the employment of cultural icon as symbol to give meaning to its user. The surimono exchange was a marketplace of such symbols, traded as self-reflections, in which competition led its participants to an ever-expanding circle of references, with the input of different kinds of currency. But although this incorporation of iconic cultural elements as signifiers may have begun as self-reflection, in the exchange itself, the value of these references was both as gift for the recipient, and as the means by which the unity of giver and receiver was posited, as equal owners of the tradition. The cultural element, in short, not only revealed the cultivation of the user, but also that of the understanding recipient, while their shared reverence for this icon made it a suitable gift. The surimono movement as whole could in this context be seen as creating a communal storehouse of such cultural icons, grounded on a naïve faith that all value and meaning can be found in the elements of the past, just as the library is established as the repository of human knowledge, or museum for human achievements within a particular field. Elements of the past are possessed by being utilized in particular works, adding to the accumulated store, then

taken out again for display and use from time to time, reinforcing them as part of the shared basis of the community founded on these exchanges.

Within this particular employment of cultural icons as a communal legacy, shared by all as both the ground for communications and the means of giving the present world significance, one can sense not only a quasi-religious investment in the past as the source of meaning, but also the formation of a new basis for community, interaction and identity, outside of the feudal order. First, there is a faith in the structures of the past as vital, containing a power that literally lights up the present configuration with significance and an idealized glow, simply by being connected to it. If surimono can be described as a celebration of the contemporary world of merchants and their values, it is so only to the extent that the forms of this world are electrified in such a manner, by being plugged into those of the past. Cultural icons are thus seen as having magical properties, requiring only some sort of link—thematic, semantic, parallel structure or physical proximity—for the transfer of their essences. Of course this use of tradition as icons may be based on superficial understanding, which views the elements of the past from a distance, with a reverence that familiarity might destroy (as it may have undermined belief in the qualities of the present formation, for example), but this approach thereby creates a pantheon of cultural elements which can be employed to recreate the meaning of the present. In this sense, we can view surimono as one kind of New Year ritual, the periodic recreation of the world through the return to the vital structures of origins and early, “strong” time. The present world is mapped onto the archetypal formations of the past, and so ordered, found comprehensible and reinvested with meaning. Just as the exchange of surimono as gifts at the New Year implied a renewal of personal bonds between givers and receivers, so then did its internal structure reconnect the new world of the reborn year with the essential structures of the past.

But all rituals, whatever their claims to exist outside of time or undo its movement, are performed within a particular historical context, which gives them their sense of necessity and importance. In the case of surimono, we can see that the means of employing the past as archetypal icon allowed for a specific kind of redefinition of the modern world, including and especially the practitioners of the movement, who gained new identities through their employment of them. For the commissioners and recipients of surimono, this elaborate linking of past and present through clever devices and astute references meant two distinct things. First, the use of selected monuments from the past as models for defining the present suggests a certain formation of culture, as legacy, which had the power to undo and revise contemporary definitions of reality, reinvesting them with new meanings in relation to a different structure of significance. Redefinition meant new identities and roles for the participants of surimono, as well as of the world in which they lived. These identities, secondly, were also forged precisely according to the utilization of this legacy as a cultural code, which the participants in the surimono movement could employ and read, making them the shapers, interpreters and inheritors of tradition. Communications between them and their fellows proceeded on an implicit basis, based on this shared code, which thus posited these participants as like-minded beings with common purposes, interests and knowledge—and most of all, mutual understanding. Explicit statements, as strangers might be forced to use in order to communicate, were replaced by subtle hints and allusions, based on an assumption of oneness among members. The language of surimono, in sum, absolutely relies upon an audience knowledgeable in the references it utilizes, and thus unified in identity as a kind of special community or society, while the pool of references it accumulates, activated and given structure in surimono, becomes precisely the means by which the present can be reinterpreted, through its relationships to the past.

The surimono movement, therefore, stands as part, and perhaps even a most revealing peak, of a growing trend towards new forms of social organization in the Tokugawa Period, centered around aesthetic pursuits based on traditional kinds of cultural knowledge, rather than the promulgated feudal bases of region or class. Like other Tokugawa Era “societies,” such as those based on *waka*, tea ceremony, singing, dance, painting, or intellectual studies, surimono practitioners, a subsection of *kyōka* and *haikai* groups, judged one another primarily by the quality of their practice, not by the origins or status of the practitioner. Although mostly male and merchant-based in the nineteenth century, this group was open to participation from anyone with an interest, regardless of class, age or gender. Like other “cultural societies,” moreover, they developed in place of these conventional, Confucian discriminations a sense of the equality of all members, based on their shared identities in the pursuit of particular kind of knowledge, often with its own, special codes of language and action. Hierarchy, where it existed, was based on the degree of mastery of these codes, not official identity, for better or worse, in the outer, social realm. In fact, new identities were often supplied for participants in these circles through the use of special names, by which fellow participants knew them, and on which they could base their practice without reference to their external definitions and the obligations accompanying them. In this manner, these groups became small enclaves, outside of the Tokugawa order. Pursuit of excellence in an aesthetic field organized by tradition became a new founding principle for community, creating social networks, a different structure for relationships, new forms of self-definition, and a special means of communication with accompanying solidarity among members. In the following sections, I will examine the unique place of the surimono movement among these organizations, specifically by examining the particular employment of “culture as legacy” within surimono, which I will then suggest is the very basis by which these groups were

organized. By exploring the alignment of the cultural past as “legacy” in surimono, in other words, we can see not only the manner in which surimono employed traditional structures as its base, but also the manner in which it anticipated a uniquely modern formation of culture as the broad basis for community.

Pursuing the Past: The Cultural Society as the Basis for Redefined Communal and Personal Identity

In the final sections, I will shift between a close analysis of surimono’s language of links—utilizing references to various monuments from the past as a code of master signifiers, overlaid onto the forms of the present to give them new meaning—and a broader focus on the significance of the social organizations within which this language was utilized, organizations whose very structure and existence relied, I will argue, on exactly the sort of presentation of culture as legacy one finds formulated in surimono. This movement between cognitive and social structures is similar to that explored in Eiko Ikegami’s Bonds of Civility: Aesthetic Networks and the Political Origins of Japanese Culture, although here I will privilege surimono as having a special place among the various activities of the aesthetic societies of mid-late Tokugawa Japan, in directly utilizing (and so determining) the elements of a cultural canon as its very material, and shaping through their use a unified, leveled and non-discriminatory view of the cultural field with vast importance. My approach to culture in these sections, this is to say, is two-pronged, on the one hand following Ikegami in her analysis of the employment of particular, group-specific aesthetic codes as the basis for community, implicit communications, and shared communal and personal identities, while on the other, looking at the formation of culture as a generalized body that opens participation in its community to everyone, implying underlying unification in its very structure. Ultimately, I will argue that we can see this structure, the manner by which elements from the past are conjoined and woven

together into a single fabric, then posited as a legacy for the present with the power to redefine it, most clearly in the language of *surimono*. But first, I would like to utilize some of the insights of Ikegami's work as a means of clarifying the place of the *surimono* exchange among the aesthetic activities of groups created for such purposes in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Ikegami's study, which she describes as an examination of "the historic process through which aesthetic socializing became a central component of pre-modern Japanese civility and associational life" that "sheds new light on...the political and organizational origins of [modern] Japanese aesthetic culture,"⁷⁸³ is suitably broad reaching in its emphasis, covering everything from the social basis of medieval *za* arts like *renga* to woodblock printed manuals of etiquette, but giving particular emphasis to the cultural societies of the Tokugawa Era. These groups, aligned around the pursuit of a specific aesthetic practice based on traditional knowledge, ranged in focus from styles of painting and poetry to flower arrangement, tea ceremony and *jōruri* chanting, and offered, Ikegami argues, a new ground for social organization and identity, undoing the definitions of the *bakufu*-promulgated order. She terms the subcultures based around these particular, generally artistic pursuits "publics," emphasizing them as "the sphere of intersections among cognitive and social networks," the sites, one might say, where specific modes of thought achieved communal order. For Ikegami, these aesthetic publics, which involved an amazing number and diversity of people, are important for at least two reasons, as the foundation for establishing civil interactions among people, within a horizontally organized space without explicit hierarchy (in light of the overarching Tokugawa hegemony, Ikegami terms this "civility without civil society") and for their organizing principle, basing social interaction and communal identity around the idea of a cultural

⁷⁸³ Ibid, 4

pursuit, typically rooted in past traditions. These aspects are significant not only as a historical challenge to the Tokugawa regime, but also in their anticipation of the modern order, in which organizations play a major role in determining civic identities, taking shape according to the underlying basis of a shared (often national, though sometimes local) cultural tradition and identity. The aesthetic networks of the Tokugawa Era, as Ikegami's title suggests, thus have much to do with the emerging conception of Japanese culture as a political concept, mobilizing and unifying citizens, where the Tokugawa order had precisely relied on dividing people and regulating their activities and interests by region and class, attempting to maintain social stability through isolation and stasis of role.

Bonds of Civility therefore highlights from a rather different angle many of the points I have been developing throughout this dissertation, but especially in the last two chapters, regarding surimono creation and exchange. Looking at the surimono exchange as an "aesthetic public," for example, we can underline the nature of this practice as an enclave within the Tokugawa feudal order, in which new rules of value, meaning and identity were defined for its practitioners according to aesthetic principles, overriding the implicit assumptions of group definition in social law (like sumptuary codes or promulgated class restrictions). It was perhaps even partly because of this heavy regulation of public life, as Ikegami suggests, that private societies like *kyōka* groups developed, offering the possibility for freer expression and a new form of social organization based on aesthetics, an area of life that—so long as it remained private, steering clear of political engagement or obvious disturbance in the social order—the Tokugawa regime was content not to control as strictly as others. The alternative reality offered by these enclaves was institutionalized in similar ways across their range, including *haikai*, *kyōka* and surimono. First, a separate identity was offered the participant through the use of a special name, to be utilized only within the

circle of practice and among participants outside of it. These names freed the user from his or her social identity and its obligations, and by blurring implicit class distinctions (samurai or farmer names for example) allowed for a horizontal basis within the groups. Next, rules for interaction within society at large, including deference to age or status, were put on hold, and replaced with particular codes of aesthetics and civility, reflected in language, behavior and communication. These codes, as in the surimono exchanges or *kyōka awase*, controlled not only the nature of the proceedings, but also the products produced at (or for) them. Within such codes, moreover, was the basis for what Ikegami calls “tacit modes of communication,” an emphasis on subtlety and the unspoken as the means of expressing a singleness of mind, as well as a belief that profound truth is located in a space beyond ordinary articulation and logic. Unfortunately, Ikegami links such tacit communications rather naively with the emergence of a distinct Japanese national identity, which is true, of course, not in any objective sense—except as a belief in mutual understanding stands as the foundation for any imagined community—but rather only as one of the self-identifying bases for something like modern *nihonjin-ron* (“theories of Japaneseness”), with Ikegami even going so far as to posit ambiguity as an essential trait thereby developed in the unique Japanese style of expression.⁷⁸⁴

⁷⁸⁴ Of course, this is not to say that tacit communications were *not* part of the modern construction of a Japanese national identity, based on political purposes, simply that Ikegami makes an error in reifying this construction as having some actuality established through centuries of Japanese aesthetic practice. Rather, I argue, we should see this as a pointed mobilization of an aspect of tradition to a particular end, not the natural outgrowth of tradition itself. In other words, tacit communications, when successful, do lead to a sense of unity and mutual understanding, but we should be wary of assuming some easy transfer from those that took place in a private circle, based on a specific cultural code, and those that imply the oneness of something like national consciousness, which were constructed over time on a different basis.

Moreover, the image of “ambiguous Japan,” like “beautiful Japan,” derived from outside of Japan itself, and has only been claimed by modern Japanese retrospectively as defining their unique characteristics. In fact, although bad translations might lead us to believe otherwise, there is nothing inherently ambiguous about the Japanese language, whatever its dropped subjects and unfinished endings, which are perfectly clear in context. Tacit communications, likewise, although often involving a leap of association or external reference to recognize, are plain to those who know the rules of such language and are familiar with its references. Nor are such communications by any means unique to

As this last example, albeit in imperfect form, suggests, while on the one hand the identities and codes of the private aesthetic enclaves could be called fictional, with relevance only within the subgroup, their external and historical implications reveal broad influence. “When networks based on aesthetic activities intersected the rapidly expanding social, political and economic networks of the Tokugawa Period,” Ikegami writes, “a set of unforeseen complex social and cultural dynamics emerged in Japanese society.”⁷⁸⁵ In economic terms, aesthetic pursuits were commercialized, particularly in woodblock printing, with how-to manuals and books of exemplary works both for and by the groups based on them, providing a living for many. In fact, some of the aesthetic societies were not simply innocent coming-togethers of like-minded amateurs, but a mobilization of curious recruits made by a group leader, who indoctrinated them in his method of practice and was supported by them thereby. Another level of real world economic implication was in the social networks of practitioners themselves, who made business connections through participation (as is most evident with publishers like Izutsuya or Tsutaya), while such networking could have political implications as well. Particularly, by blurring distinctions between classes, allowing for the interaction of samurai and commoners, these groups fostered mutual understanding and recognition, and thus a means for human unification outside promulgated class differences, while no doubt again offering real world economic and power advantages to participants through high connections. The overlapping of group members, likewise, allowed for the transfer of specialized knowledge from one kind of group to another (*haikai* and *kokugaku* to *kyōka* for example), thereby forming communication networks as well. Another unexpected result of this rise of

Japan, implying that reading them is some strength of the “Japanese character.” In fact, Japanese people with English fluency can become as lost in the “ambiguities” and “tacit communications” of English, which are not apparent to native English speakers, who intuit meaning by context and habitual usage.

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid, 7

traditionally based aesthetics as the ground for interaction was the renewed importance given to the imperial court, conventionally the center of traditional aesthetics, which thereby became a major focus of interest in certain activities (such as *kyōka*). In perhaps her most dramatic example of the possible political implications of aesthetic enclaves, however, Ikegami shows how the poetry networks that had developed in the Tama region served as the foundation for the rise of the People's Rights Movement (自由民権 • *Jiyū Minken*) there in the early Meiji Era. Whatever their "private" nature, then, the aesthetic societies that developed in the Tokugawa Era had clear and definite "public" implications.

One of these implications, the central theme in fact of Ikegami's book, was the development of a different formation of culture around these aesthetic pursuits. For Ikegami, culture is an "emergent property" that arises from the practices of the aesthetic societies, not simply a given that precedes and informs them. Culture is thus enacted in relation to the specific codes of the aesthetic societies, which transform values and feelings into stable, cognitive forms that can be disseminated as models among students, ultimately resulting in collective cultural identities.⁷⁸⁶ Participation in a group, this is to say, was a kind of socialization, which taught the participant how to act or compose according to a certain set of rules, although it also permitted free interpretation and creativity within the limits of these rules, allowing for the interjection of individual subjectivity. Precisely through this dynamic, the groups became a means by which both individual and communal identities could be established, in relation to one another, organized around both a set of shared aesthetic principles and its exact utilization by unique participants. Once again, this form of community and the relationships established through it had nothing to do with standard Confucian relations by age, gender or position, or the feudal bases of

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid, 47

definition by regional or class identification, relying instead entirely on aesthetic codes. Although bound only by “weak ties,” permitting the coming and going of members according to their desires and needs, these groups thereby stood as a reflection of the true predilections of their members, based on personal interests, not obligation. The very nature of these societies thus posited aesthetic interests as an authentic part of personal character; although there was much more to gain in a society than just refinement of one’s mastery of traditional codes (companionship, entertainment, recognition, a sense of purpose, personal definition, important social ties, freedom from conventional social obligations) the aesthetic principle was the reason around which all of its activities and even the existence of a given society was founded. Based on these resilient networks, which survived the upheavals at the end of the Tokugawa Era, and their many implications, Ikegami ultimately attempts to link these Tokugawa publics to the modern social formation, in which Japan’s identity as nation, and thus of its individual citizens, is in part founded on the notion of high aesthetic cultivation.

As with her identification of “ambiguous Japan” however, Ikegami’s conceptualization here fails in taking the modern *images* of aesthetic Japan, land of beauty and cultural sophistication, as a reflection of actual realities, the emergent properties, she says, of the artistic societies.⁷⁸⁷ There are several historical problems with her thinking here as well, which I will treat chronologically. First, although Ikegami makes a point of emphasizing that in medieval times “the body of cultural

⁷⁸⁷ In fairness, Ikegami begins the summation of her thought with a balanced political conception, arguing that: “an ideological formulation of Japan’s cultural identity became conspicuous only with the rise of nationalistic sentiment...and the eventual construction of the Meiji nation-state, which served as a lens that brought the various images of Japan into sharper focus” (364). She soon begins to mistake the image in the lens for the original reality, however, stating that: “the popular images [when? And for whom?] of Japan as a land dedicated to beauty were cultural emergent properties that were manifested in these spheres of communication [the Tokugawa publics]” (368) and “the emergence of the image of Japan [same questions] as an aesthetic treasure-house was an unintended consequence of the cultural developments that grew out of this network revolution” (370).

knowledge rarely functioned as an imagined link with the space called Japan in the minds of the population at large,” she wants to assume that this was in fact the case under Tokugawa rule, identifying “a plane of commonality [that] evolved primarily within the realm of the beautiful in Tokugawa society,” and connecting this not only with the aesthetic societies, but with the foundations of a national identity laid by the *kokugaku* movement, particularly Motoori Norinaga’s conceptions of *mono no aware* (sensitivity) and a pure, aestheticized Japanese past.⁷⁸⁸ However, there is no clear basis for this identification in Ikegami’s structure, which posits the aesthetic societies as focused on separate, aesthetic goals, despite some intermingling, goals, moreover that remain specific, not tied in any way (outside of *kokugaku*) to national identity. This can be plainly seen in the free mixing of Chinese influences in forms like *bunjin* painting, haikai poetry and surimono, let alone groups based exclusively on Chinese language study and composition, revealing that there was no clear alignment of aesthetic interests and nation. Next, Ikegami’s argument is curiously ahistorical when it comes to modern Japan, assuming that “aesthetic Japan” and “beautiful Japan” were important images from the Meiji restoration forth. In fact, these images, although long popular in Europe, took precedence within Japan only after its defeat in the Pacific War and rejection of militarism, requiring national redefinition, while the image of civilization in the Meiji Era has a much more strident, disciplined and rational tone than one would expect if rarified aesthetics were the main basis for self-definition. Finally, and perhaps most crucially, Ikegami seems actually to believe in these images of Japan as reflecting historical truth, rather than political expediency, positing them as based directly on the broad participation of the population in aesthetic societies, despite the fact that, as mentioned above, there were many more reasons than just

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid, 9, 369.

refinement of one's abilities for entering into one of these social organizations, as she herself describes.

The main value of Ikegami's study, then, is in highlighting the historical importance of the Tokugawa aesthetic publics, in relation to the political and social arrangements of their own time, while her argument loses strength when applied to over-generalized modern themes, in relation to which she identifies contemporary self-definitions and historical framing as the actual result of—not simply the politically motivated manipulation of—the aesthetic organizations of the past. In her examination of aesthetic codes as a new ground for communal configuration and identity, however, Ikegami powerfully suggests the manner in which social networks could form outside of the compass of the Tokugawa Regime, without reference to its authority, implying the freedom of individuals, their self-definitions and chosen associations, from the state. Such freedom, of course, took place only within folds of the social fabric, which could be forcibly opened and eliminated at any time, while interactions in the official realm still required adherence to established hierarchies, obligations and modes of behavior. But these alignments of individuals on a substantially different basis than that officially promulgated, with different rules of engagement and means of interpersonal connection, were nevertheless quite real, undoing any possible belief, for example, in class difference as a natural basis for society, thus revealing both the arbitrariness and lack of necessity of the Tokugawa order. And it is here, in fact, rather than in images of “aesthetic Japan,” that we can find a meaningful connection between the Tokugawa aesthetic societies and the modern social construction, which also seeks to posit a unity of members (citizens) based on their shared cultural legacy and adherence to its informing code (nation). To my thinking then, the error of Ikegami's conceptualization is in attempting to define a

relation of this new basis for communal order and identity in aesthetics to the modern formation in terms of *content*, rather than of *structure*.

For, conceptualized in a slightly different manner, the Tokugawa aesthetic societies can be seen to bear definite and important relations to the modern formation, particularly in the manner in which they supplied communal identity to participants, breaking down class distinctions through reference to a cultural code that stood above all participants and unified them in aspiration for it. This code, related to a traditional aesthetic practice, was also the basis for individual identity within the group, in regard to one's ability to employ it, and the specific applications to which it was put. In regard to this latter aspect, there was hierarchy and playful competition within certain groups, as participants attempted to outdo one another in wise, witty or original applications of the cultural code, particularly in creative endeavors. And yet the groups were not exclusive, closed to all but those good enough to master the artistic language, but rather open to participation by all, even beginners. In this respect, they reveal a very different understanding of culture and its applicability than previous employments of such codes for defining an elite group, sufficiently knowledgeable to use it correctly. It is here, I believe, rather than in the simple transition of aesthetic identity from groups to a nation, that we can find the importance of these societies in relation to the modern structure. For in positing cultivated practices as not only the basis for communal and individual identities and their relation, but also as a legacy from the past, open to everyone for use as a means of coming together and creatively redefining the present, the organization of these societies bears much in common with the unifying modern formation in its assertion of national culture, as in part a history of cultivated aesthetic activity which informs all citizens, standing as their background. It is here too, I believe that analysis of the inner language of *surimono*, which takes cultural knowledge as its very material, is useful in understanding the

organization of “culture” that infuses the modern scene. I will therefore turn to an examination of this structure in the next section.

Past as Legacy: The Construction of Culture as a Foundation for Community

In the chapter of her Bonds of Civility dealing with *haikai* societies, perhaps the most prevalent and influential of all of the Tokugawa aesthetic hobby groups, Ikegami states the following:

Learning how to compose *haikai* poetry was equivalent to receiving an inheritance—in this case, the vast cultural capital accumulated over centuries of Japanese classical literary tradition.... Through the learning of *haikai* poetry, men and women of humble backgrounds acquired their own expressions and extended their social networks.⁷⁸⁹

At this point, I would like to move back to a close analysis of the language of surimono, bringing in Ikegami’s insight on the use of the cultural structures of the past as an “inheritance” for present day users of all classes and backgrounds. Thus far, I have described surimono language in terms of the nature of text-image interaction, with different arrangements of past and present signifiers in poetry and illustration creating harmonies and dissonance in their overlay; in terms of the verbal and visual functions of text and image, with illustrations coming to conjoin with the content of the poetry through both visual and verbal mirrors, and links referencing a conventional system of calibrated meanings; and finally the relation of this conventional system to a set of master signifiers, the icons of the classical past. Now, I will turn to an examination of the particular configuration and method of deployment of this group of master signifiers in the surimono exchange, and how it relates to the kinds of community developed in this and similar movements. For I believe that by closely analyzing the construction of surimono’s language, its processing of the past, we can

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid, 176-77

discern a particular organization and employment of culture that is at one level unique among the popular aesthetic activities of the Tokugawa groups, a singular code specific to its group, but at another broadly pertinent, as the very assumed structure by which these groups operated, with profound implications for the modern configuration as well.

Fundamentally, in the construction of *kyōka* surimono, as in Hesse's glass bead game that stands as its metaphor, the use of paradigms from past works, figures and events as cultural icons, "beads" in a game of links, relied first and foremost upon their decontextualization, the release of any given element from its original circumstances of production. This allowed the element to take on transcendent status, outside of historical, class, generic or geographic identification, thereby transforming it to a universal property, one available to all, not the possession of any period, group, school or local body. In this sense, entirely unlike the *kokugaku* movement with which it is sometimes equated, surimono made no qualitative distinction between material taken from "China" and that of ancient "Japan." The absence of consciousness or concern for national boundaries is seen to extend even to *Rangaku* (Dutch studies), with the employment of European pictorial motifs on a subset of works, also cleverly conjoined with familiar New Year customs through regular employment of the surimono code (Figure 64). In short, if a theme was known, and recognized as important in structuring a view of life, it could be therefore employed, without discrimination. Chronologically too, there was no clear distinction made between the ancient past (古・*inishie*) favored by *kokugaku*, middle antiquity (中古・*chūko*) and later ages (後世・*kōsei*), with material from sacred mythology, court narratives and relatively recent commoner literature such as *otogizōshi* all employed equally as the elements of signification, although there was evidently a practical preference for works with short sections (*Ise monogatari*, *Makura no sōshi* etc.) over



Figure 64: “Dutch Lady and Pet Goat.” A *shikishi-ban* surimono for the New Year of 1823, with *kyōka* verses by Tamagawasha Kinodokunari, Sekihandō Yamamori and others, and illustration by Totoya Hokkei. From

extended narratives. Decontextualization, as I have described previously, even extended to some extent to the content of the icon, certainly to considerations for its classification as fiction or history, painting or prose, warrior or court-centered, but also to its original meaning in regard to the circumstances of its day. In place of the actual work, act or personage, with all of its contingencies and multiplicities of interpretation, the role of a cultural icon—a single, glass bead—was substituted, which then allowed for employment of these references with no relation to their original contexts. And this, in turn, allowed for their easy connection to the present world, through even the most superficial of links, as well as to each other.

Kyōka surimono, as a movement, in its openness to material, and systematic employment of this material in links, can thus be figured as a kind of mechanism that takes in and processes all of the recognized elements of the cultural past, transforming them into the means by which the present world can be understood, through simplification and interconnection. At one end of this fantastic, Seussian machine was a gathering tool, broad in its sweep, which moved over texts, extracting from them memorable lines, scenes, characters and relevant objects, which were then broken into their individual elements, and reconfigured accordingly as hard-surfaced signifiers as they passed through its internal mechanism. At the other end, these signifiers emerged as icons, representing their original source, in a reduced manner frequently metonymic, but with the power of easily summoning up its aura. These icons, moreover, having combined with affiliated elements within the body of the machine, did not emerge singularly, but embedded within patterns that linked them to related material, according to various rules of connection. Specifically, the grid by which the machine operated was based on the configuration of the present world, to which the newly introduced elements could combine, although other iconic elements already in the machine's store could subsequently accumulate onto them as well. The methods

of combination were open and quite various, from semantic to thematic overlap, a mirroring of one object found in another or a link that relied on matching their qualities, even superficial ones. The emergent product was preserved through copies, these exchanged, viewed and analyzed by experts, and then the icons of the structure broken apart and poured back into the belly of the machine, for future recombination with other material. The machine, moreover, was hungry, driven by curiosity, competition and a desire for comprehensiveness, not satisfied only to repeat the familiar, but continually reaching out for new material, new icons and clever methods of integration, and thus growing a little larger and more complex with each experiment.

Absurd as it may sound to describe the mental and structural dynamics of the surimono exchange through such a physical metaphor, this was nevertheless precisely how surimono as a movement operated, albeit with much more agency. The commissioners of surimono scoured through celebrated texts, sometimes as a group,⁷⁹⁰ seeking clever ways to reference them in present-world oriented *kyōka* poetry. These verses were then transformed into poetry presentation sheets with illustrations reflecting their content and devices, giving another layer of signification to the poetry, typically with a similar past-present overlay. Sometimes, of course, the spark was not a text, but a classic image, be it specific, as in the Fuji Maiden, or generalized, as in the conventional depiction of Benten. Or again, the inspiration could be present-oriented, as in the series *Uma-zukushi*, which took the zodiac sign of the New Year as the basis for cultural accumulation and connection under the motif “horse.” But whatever the configuration, the ultimate end was the same, the creation of pattern and order, based on the connection of an array of cultural elements to the forms of the

⁷⁹⁰ In series based on a particular *monogatari* or history, groups sometimes read the work together, producing verses based on its material. Such was apparently the basis for a number of series in the 1810s, such as sets on *Tsurezuregusa* and *Ise Monogatari* by the Asakusa Group in 1811-12.

present world. The variety of materials and methods of configuration were broad, based on competition and the striving for originality in the surimono exchanges, thus appropriating a wealth of cultural capital through its employment in works. And these celebrated elements were only seldom used and discarded, more often reworked into yet more advanced works, as we have seen with the motif of tea ceremony implements in the introduction, or Huang Chuping to seven herb *kayu* sticks here, leading to further links and a more sophisticated surimono code. In all of this, however, the use of the cultural past was as hard, hollow icon, not sticky and complex interior, allowing for the smooth, breezy connection of one element with another, a play with signifiers, not an attempt to elucidate the contents of signifieds. It was instead the arrangement of these icons, their employment in connection with one another, and these to the forms of the present, that of itself gave surimono meaning.

This mining and processing of the past for its employment as present-defining motif in *kyōka* surimono meant several significant things. First, all of the known facets of human civilizations, regardless of their origins, were combined into a single, general pool of material, and the elements of this utilized in exactly the same manner, combining with the structures of the present, as well as with their own suggestive openings. The singular nature of this pool, or storehouse, as well as its interlinking and the non-discriminatory method of its usage, defined this group of disparate elements as a unity of equal parts, comprising the structures of civilization, in the singular. Moreover, the only means of making sense of the present world, according to the organization of surimono, was in relation to this pool of signifying elements, enhancing its vaunted status. The past, broken down and recombined in this manner, was thereby posited as a universal legacy given for defining life in the present, open and available to all for use. One did not need to be a warrior to find the Yorifusa-Takauji episode of relevance, or a courtier to understand the importance of the Tale of

Genji. Nor were these realms themselves necessarily distinct. One could illuminate a reference to *Heike monogatari*, for example, through *Ise monogatari*, as in Magao's *Izutsu* poem for a representation of the Uji Bridge Battle. Certainly, in terms of contemporary thinking, this was a jumble of registers, with different levels of cultural history mixed up and confused. But the point of "cultural history" in surimono is precisely that it is a storehouse, neither a timeline nor a chart of differing social interests, with all the noteworthy elements that it contained flattened, dehistoricized and made level and one, regardless of their circumstances of production, and with all of these references then leading to the present configuration. Exactly through this convergence in the present, moreover, traced back in reverse, all aspects of the past could be seen as belonging to everyone, as their determining background. The very construction of surimono, then, in which elements of past practices are cast as fixed stars in a transcendent field, and then various lines drawn between them and the forms of the present world to utilize these ancient lights as orienting constellations, shows us the inner workings of what I will call, in a very particular sense, "culture."

Culture is an over-determined and much embattled concept, and it is essential to point out that I am by no means employing it as an actually transcendent or unifying force that determines human life according to its placement within certain social, racial, class, gender or national groupings. In fact, I wish to employ "culture" here in a very limited way, even more specific than my comments on this topic at the end of Chapter Two. What interests me in relation to surimono language is not the unconscious influence of the past as ideology, the practices and assumptions passed from parent to child, generation to generation, as "natural" ways of understanding and structuring the world, many of which never reach consciousness, but rather precisely the *conscious* employment of elements—figures, works, stories, objects—from the past as models for determining the meaning of life in the present. Conventionally,

these models are sometimes chosen for the moral values they convey, as exemplar or warning, for the aesthetic heights they reach, as inspiration for contemporary efforts, or for the comforting precedents they offer, to guide activity in the present. But the past, with distance transforming contingent act or structure to absolute meaning, also provides codes, for language usage (through intertextuality), creative practice (with “masterpieces” reified), and for personal identity, through association with specific models that suggest how one might meaningfully live. This employment of culture, as I have described it, is as legacy, with the acts, events, lives, works and structures of the past employed as the very means for understanding where we have come from and where we are going, thus giving depth to the arbitrary forms of the present, and shedding meaningful light on them in regard what has come before.

What differentiates a view of the past as legacy from the employment of culture in a limited sense, as a code used to protect privilege and heighten a sense of elite identity, is first, the openness of a “legacy” to everyone, and second, its all-encompassing nature. A medieval poet may have had a “way” of poetry to follow that required a deep awareness of previous works in the form, or a painter the benefits and limitations of working within the approach of a particular school, requiring ability for entrance and focused application of traditional knowledge for acceptance. But this conception of “culture as legacy” combined all branches of poetry and painting, along with religious myth and practice, folktale, literary fiction and non-fiction, all of the plastic and decorative arts, ceremonies, festivals and rituals, and even the art of living itself, into a single “way,” which one might call the way of being a civilized being. To some extent, we can thus say that culture in the surimono movement was at times applied in the exclusive sense of “civilization” as it developed in relation to class and colonialism in nineteenth century Europe, where its codes were employed to reveal its users as advanced, cultivated people, whose unique bonds with one another as the

highly socialized and knowledgeable were predicated on shutting others out. This is the application of culture as code, limited to those who can employ and understand it, and positing their unity through implicit communications, mannered behavior and set rules for creativity.

But the key difference is that *surimono* and related aesthetic movements were not closed, discriminatory or elitist in organization, but open to anyone who might have an interest in participating. Certainly the judgments of the relative qualities of individual works highlighted the distinctions between the truly advanced and those adepts who still had much to learn, but the openness of organizations like *haikai* and *kyōka* societies, which cut across class and regional lines, implied that the cultivated language of poetry was a code available for everyone. Behind this openness, of course, was an economic imperative, the need for the leaders of groups, like Magao, or the many competing *haikai* masters, to recruit enough students to support them. But whether or not openness was ideologically or economically driven, its result was much the same, to offer the structures of meaning presented by the past as a kind of inheritance to contemporary users. These groups thus take their place alongside practices like *kokugaku*, which spawned its own societies and schools and likewise strove to make the structures of the past legible and applicable to people in the present, as part of a grand movement in the Tokugawa Period to rearrange the distribution of knowledge, taking traditional works and practices from the exclusive claim of a few elite families and dispersing them widely. The advancement of woodblock printing as a commercial enterprise, likewise, had an essential role in this transformation, and the societies based on aesthetic or intellectual practices utilized printing to both to engage with and distribute new works based on these traditional structures.

Moreover, this “commonly shared” cultural past was not a given, but at least in part one the commissioners of *surimono* were shaping even as they laid claim to. In a

simple formula, by making subtle allusions to literary and artistic monuments in a manner that assumed they were common knowledge for all, they made them so, even if retroactively, in the explanation following the print. Surimono language, requiring a high degree of cultural literacy, was ever expanding the bounds of actively shared culture with its inclusiveness, reaching out for new references, while binding these forms of the past into an organic structure. In so doing, the makers of surimono were appropriating the past, positing themselves as the shapers and movers of “culture,” by popularizing and bringing into present consciousness a number of facts and forms otherwise buried in books, as a means of redefining both themselves and their world. In this latter respect, moreover, we must suspect that not all cultural signifiers were as equal as they might at one level appear. Although certainly any reference could be employed in a surimono, and warrior works were a strong component among them, there was nevertheless a clear preference for courtly narratives, whether Heian or Chinese, which held more relevance to and potential for redefinition in a way favored by its merchant commissioners. Specifically, whereas warrior works tended to have some moral component, generally focusing on character, court-based works often celebrated extravagance and wealth, as well as primarily aesthetic values. Rather than seeing these preferences as privileging a particular context of origin, however, I believe we should see them as reflecting the range of possibilities offered by the decontextualized cultural icons, some of which were found more appropriate to the commissioner’s particular interests and purposes than others. Thus, for example, references to warrior chronicles, as in this depiction of a silver statuette Priest Saigyō had given away after Minamoto Yoritomo had rewarded him with it for his treachery (Figure 65), an episode taken from *Azuma kagami*, could also focus on symbols of wealth, albeit here in a moral display of self-disgust. The extravagance of the gesture, however, is made the center of focus in the print, lessening the moral emphasis of the

original content. There is nothing objective, this is to say, about the particular employment of elements on surimono, even though we can posit a lack of discrimination regarding the context (regional, social class or historical) of the original source.

Such a utilization of key moments from the cultural past as the means of reinvesting the forms of the present with deepened significance, while highlighting the cultivation of its users, bears much resemblance in fact to the employment of culture in the modern social formation. Particularly, when the concept of culture as a legacy is fit within the structures of nation and national community, the result is a view that defines the identity and unity of citizens according to an idea of their shared historical background, the projection of the structures of the nation-state back into the recesses of history. The reconfiguration of one's identity and surrounding reality through employment of the past, which had served as a challenge to the Tokugawa order, was thus reworked as the means of shaping a unified and usable citizenry. Although there was likely in fact more similarity between a modern Japanese citizen and a modern Chinese or Russian one, than between this citizen and a figure like Minamoto Yoshitsune, the former became *gaijin* outsiders, capable of being engaged in wars for the enhancement of the "homeland," while the latter was posited as a close relative, an embodiment of a part of the "Japanese spirit" still active in the present and informing the current formation (including the idea of heroic war.) At one, diachronic level, as the ramifications of nation were carefully explored through its projected past, cultural history became actually historical (*kokushi*), a sequential arrangement of developments at different times and in disparate sectors of now defunct principles of social organization. But at another it retained its synchronic, storehouse effect as an array of various signifiers, each representing an aspect of the "Japanese psyche," with



Figure 65: *Saigyō Plums* (西行梅) from the set *A Series for the Hanazono Group* (花園番続) A *shikishi-ban* surimono for the New Year of 1823, with *kyōka* by Kadota Inamura and Sessōan, and illustration by Totoya Hokkei. Phoenix Museum of Art.

Lady Murasaki thus potentially as related to the present configuration as Bashō, Taira Kiyomori or Prince Shotoku. Of course, under the rubric of nation, the pantheon of heroes shifted in regard to the needs of the state, so that we find, for example, a sudden enhancement of the status of historical “emperor protectors” (Shigehira, Kojima Takanori etc.) in the Meiji Era, and a careful alignment of other cultural heroes and works according to the values they modeled. This selectivity differs somewhat from the employment of these paradigms in surimono, in which their aura as classical elements was as much or more of a draw than their signifying content, but the structure—the utilization of forms from the past as the basis for giving meaning to the present, and as the background of the users themselves and their means for self-understanding—remains largely intact.

Kyōka surimono, in sum, represent a deployment of cultural forms for a particular purpose, implicitly highlighting the knowledge and cultivation of their makers, while explicitly overlaying the structures of the past over those of the present to give them a new signifying context, thereby undoing conventional, official understandings of reality. Such a practice, which may seem to be backward looking in basing modern definitions and identities on the forms of the past, is surprisingly progressive in its employment of these resources, anticipating with its formation of culture as a universal inheritance the modern usage of cultural legacy for shaping identity and unity in the nation-state. The formation we see developing in surimono is absolutely not the same as that of the modern nation-state, including China as a major part and even Europe to a limited extent within its body of materials for the shaping of new identities and understanding. Nevertheless, I believe surimono’s configuration of culture is unprecedented before its time, particularly in its universalism, its inclusiveness both of material—decontextualized, leveled, and unified through interconnections—and of people, who are posited as all being equal inheritors of the

system, and unified through its employment. Such unification, when occurring at a personal level of meaningful communication, mutual respect and obligation, made the surimono enclave a place of pleasure and play, outside of the official social order. When these mechanisms are instituted into the social order, and used to mobilize people according to the needs of the state, unification, solidarity, mutual understanding and community can no longer be posited as unequivocally positive values, however, potentially leading both to beneficial change and unprecedented destructiveness.

Epilogue

Analysis of the language of surimono, with its material of cultural elements, structured in relation to the present formation, thus leads us inexorably from formal concerns—the specific ways in which the past was linked to the present as in Magao's formulation, primarily through text and image interactions—to political and social ones, particularly the relation of this structure to the establishment of community, communal and personal identities, through both its specific code and general configuration of culture. The riddle-like complexity of *kyōka* surimono, so important to the establishment of personal identities and solidarity in the surimono exchanges, thus shows itself to be constructed on a very particular basis, by which it could be deciphered, typically involving the application of a celebrated cultural monument or monuments to the present moment. This construction, based largely on the nature of *kyōka*, which delighted in giving current world form to the classics, was given an additional dimension in text-image interaction, with present-past elements dispersed in various formations to these two forms. Utilizing the various devices and techniques of poetry, illustrations were made to mirror or link to the verses in playful, indirect ways, according to visual applications of poetic approach and essence, and verbal

connections between text and image that allowed them to come together in a sequence of semantic links. These links explicitly involved a system of signifiers referenced by but largely external to the print itself, namely a collection of cultural monuments, often accessed by the print through a series of hints and clues, the monument reduced to a signifying icon, though sometimes explicit in the title. Knowledge of these monuments, sometimes even intimate knowledge, was posited as the only way the print could be fully understood, and the connection between past and present made. Surimono can therefore be described as the employment of culture as a specific code, creating unity among participants in the movement by basis of shared interests, knowledge and understanding, expressed in tacit communications requiring unspoken, mutual understanding.

At the same time, however, the openness of surimono and related movements revealed a different mode of cultural definition in play, cultural as legacy, not simply private code, which made participation in this movement available to everyone with an interest, and involved all manner of cultural material, without discrimination for the circumstances of its origins. Here the specific code of surimono, the internal structure of its works, is open-ended in regard to the cultural past, willing to utilize any sort of well-known material as icon, regardless of its temporal, geographic, generic, class or political context. In tying all of this material to the present, as the method for defining the meaning of present structures, the structure of surimono implies that this material is a universal inheritance, supplying significance for everyone in the present configuration. In this regard, the original placement of the signifying cultural element is itself of no significance, as these elements unify and become transcendent, as the body of the cultural legacy. The surimono exchange thus reveals itself as a cross-section between two versions of culture, as code and as legacy, with success in the exchange relying on skilful employment of the code, but the openness of the exchange

based on the idea that these codes are, potentially at least, the property of everyone. Such a conception of culture as inheritance bears close resemblance to the modern construction of culture, as the basis for determining the unity and identity of citizens, and of their place in the world, according to the employment of culture as national legacy. The addition of nationalism significantly distinguishes the kind of community created and the references whereby this community is shaped, undoing the undifferentiated reliance on what might retrospectively be called “Chinese structures” that informs a good part of *surimono*, and of other Tokugawa aesthetic clubs, yet the underlying construction of unity and self-definition through reliance on a cultural heritage is much the same. Although this construction underlay most of the Tokugawa aesthetic clubs and their openness to willing participants, we can see it most clearly in the organization of *surimono*, which explicitly relied on the cultural monuments of the past for its material and habitually connected these to the present as the way of determining meaning.

In terms of the broad, historical sweep of the *surimono* movement, from its origins as a cross between the New Year album (*saitanchō*) and poetry presentation sheet (*kaishi*), to its form in *kyōka* after its additional hybridization with the calendar print, we can see an increasingly public, social and political role for this privately printed genre. From a means of proselytizing the excellence and particular aesthetics of poetry groups and its poets, enveloping important patrons as contributors and recipients as a way of enhancing their involvement in one’s poetic circle, *surimono* transformed, largely through the addition of illustration and the use of this illustration to a pointed, poetically defined end, *surimono* became a grand game which played with cultural forms and found the meaning of the present moment of its creators through them. We can see this movement too in the change in methods of distribution, from the private delivery system, in which one received a *surimono* and enjoyed it at

one's leisure alone, in a personal space, to the enclave of the surimono exchange, a special space that was both private, in being open to participants only, and public, in involving a number of people in simultaneous and openly shared appreciation on a neutral ground. The dynamics of such exchanges, in their concentration of giving, receiving and comparison, the directness of offering and response, transformed surimono through competition into increasingly complex and original configurations, specifically by making them public, allowing commissioners and recipients to show off and define themselves, their knowledge, wit and personal qualities, on this stage. In this manner, surimono became an expression with the power to redefine not only the status of its commissioners, by explicitly showing them to be people of cultivation and quality, but also the forms of their world, by overlaying conventional, modern understanding with the vitalizing forms of an idealized past. This pattern, which dominates the structure of *kyōka* surimono at their height, implies a particular understanding of present and past and the cultural forms that bind them, leading to the emergence of a notion of culture as a transcendent, unified field which infuses and defines the present. *Kyōka* surimono, in sum, are the remnants of an elaborate game played with cultural forms, the underlying rules of which reveal a change in discursive mode uncannily similar to that of subsequent political and social constructions.

APPENDIX I

Figures Associated with the Early Development of Surimono

Key:

AKD: Aichi Kyōiku Daigaku-zō (using Okada Masaru's numbering)

KMB: Kakimori Bunko Collection

** Indicates two poems by this poet on the surimono (***=three etc.)

Italics indicates a surimono likely commissioned by this poet.

Bold indicates an illustrated surimono

[#/#/#] total number of surimono appearances / number of appearances on illustrated works / number of commissioned works, poets listed in order of prolificacy.

Kishi Senshū 岸沾州 (1671-1741)

Sentoku Group. Born in Ōmi, moved to Edo. With **Teisa**, the most frequent contributor to early surimono, commissioning two (extant in the **Rantai** collection), including the 1726 "First Horse" surimono with color printed image of the Inari Shrine by Kien. His *haikai* was first published in 1695 under the name Minchō. He went to Edo the following year, where he became a disciple of **Sentoku**, receiving the name Senshū in 1698. In 1704, he joined **Jorei** on a trip to Kyōto. Published his first *saitanchō* in 1705. Was on good terms with the disciples of **Kikaku** and **Ransetsu**, and after the deaths of these masters in 1707, promoted unification of the schools under Sentoku leadership. Senshū is acknowledged as Sentoku's best disciple, taking the head position in the Sentokumon after that master's death in 1726. He seems to have been more prolific and energetic than his master. Near the end of his life, for example, he performed a single man, one-day *haikai* session ala Saikaku, completing 5,000 verses. He also helped to establish the *tenja* association system in Edo, in which his specialty was noted to be "hiyu haikai" (metaphorical haikai), a somewhat superficial version of Kikaku's late manner. His poetry tends towards the comic, preferring human subjects to natural; he was especially proficient at *haikai* on amorous matters, and famous for creating double entendres out of virtually any poetic material.

AKD: 1, 4***, 5**, 6****, 11***, 21, 37, **38**, 39**, 40, 42, 45, **46**, 47, 48**, **64**, **66**, 67**, **68****, 70, 73** [21/6/1]

Kuwaoka Teisa 桑岡貞佐 (1672-1734)

Kikaku Group. Lived in Edo. The most frequent contributor to early surimono, even more than **Senshū**, his closest rival in this regard, as most of the prints with Teisa's name contain multiple verses by him. Also commissioned four surimono, and was the subject of another. After traveling to Kyōto in 1701-02, he returned to Edo, and became a central figure in the haikai scene there, growing intimate with the Sentoku group. One of the most prolific and popular poets of his time, though by most modern accounts, quite mediocre. Said to be a heavy drinker and carouser, staying single all of his life. Led his own poetry group, the best pupil of which was Heisa. Published heavily and remained active in *haikai* until his death at age 63.

AKD: 1***, 5, 6****, 7****, 8, 9****, **10**, 11****, 12**, 24, 30**, 33, 34**, **38**, 39**, 40****, 42, **46**, 47**, 67**, 75** [21/3/4]

Higuchi Sanseki II 樋口山夕 (Dates Unknown, Active late 1690s-1730s)

Pupil of his father, Higuchi Sanseki I (a student of either Ishida Mitoku or Genrei). Edo affiliation uncertain, but served as a leading *tenja*. Poetic name: Sensui, which he seems later to have given to a pupil, who appears with him on several surimono. Sanseki had close ties with the daimyō Ōmura **Rantai**, performing *tentori haikai* with him as both fellow participant and point assigning master, several years before Rantai began to receive and collect surimono. He appears with Rantai on over half of the surimono that include Rantai's name, but only seems to have commissioned one of his own (in the Rantai collection). Surprisingly little is known of his life, though he published quite a few books, including *Wakaba Awase* with **Kikaku** in 1696.

AKD: 1**, 3, 8, 10, 12**, 18, 21***, 33, 41, 42**, 44, 46, 51**, 66, 68, 73, 75 [17/7/1]

Ōmura Rantai 大村蘭台 (-1738). Daimyō. Feudal Lord of Hizen (contemporary Nagasaki). Born as Ōmura Sumitsune, the fourth son of Ōmura Suminaga, in 1670. At age 41, he was adopted into the family of his elder brother, the fifth Lord of Hizen, and thus aligned to succeed as the sixth Lord shortly thereafter, holding this post from 1712 to 1727. But for at least a decade before assuming political leadership, Rantai's off-duty hours in Edo had been given to the practice of haikai poetry. His efforts in haikai began with *tentori* sessions at his residence in 1703, recorded on *kaishi* and preserved in his collection of haikai materials. From these sheets, we can see how Rantai summoned and became familiar with most of the leading haikai poets in Edo at the beginning of the eighteenth century, including many of the masters with whom he appeared on surimono and from whom he was to receive them. He seems to have had especially close relationships with **Jokō**, **Wafū**, **Teisa**, **Senshū** and **Murin**, though his affiliations in the haikai world were loose and free.

AKD: 3, 8, 10, 16, 18**, 20, 24, 26, 27, 33, 37, 42**, 51, 56, 75 [15/3/4]

Kitamura Wafū 北村和風 (?-1737)

Chōwa Group. Said to be an Edoite, though his name appears in a 1692 work, *Kibi no nakayama*, with Kamigata poets. A close associate of Rantai, most of his early surimono appearances were with him, though he later appears with other Edo poets.

AKD: 3, 8, 10, 12**, 18, 33**, 38, 41**, 42, 47**, 75 [11/5]

Jokō 如蒿 (dates unknown, active c.1704-1730)

Affiliation unknown. Poetic names: Rakushiken, Juseirō. A close associate, possibly even lead retainer of Rantai's. Produced the first extant program surimono, suggesting that he had the wealth to sponsor a *yōkyoku* performance at his home. He also commissioned several surimono.

AKD: 3, 8**, 10**, 18**, 33***, 38, 41**, 42, 73**, 75 [10/5/3]

Mizuma (also Kadota) Sentoku 水間沾徳 (1662-1726)

Initially Rogen Group, then Rosen Group. An Edoite. Formed and led the Sentoku Group, dominating the Edo scene with Kikaku and his pupils. Served as master at several of Rantai's early *tentori* haikai sessions, and appeared with him on a few

surimono. He was not as active in surimono production as his leading pupil Senshū however. Considered one of the greatest haikai poets throughout the Edo Period, he is largely neglected today.

AKD: 1, 3, 5, 6, 11, 38, 40, 67**, 75 [9/2]

Horiuchi Senkaku 堀内仙鶴 (1675-1748)

Sentoku Group. Studied under Sentoku from 1690 to 1706, after which he moved to Kyōto and established his own group, taking the Edo style of tentori haikai entertainment with him. Commissioned several surimono in Kyōto, while appearing on others in Edo.

AKD: 1, 5***, 7***, 14, 21***, 22, 33(?), 42, 51 [9]

Tokura Hakuun 戸倉白雲 (?-1730)

Kikaku Group. Born in Ōsaka, lived in Edo.

AKD: 1, 5, 6**, 34**, 35, 39**, 43**, 48**, 73 [9]

Matsuki Tantan 松木淡々 (1676?-1761)

Initially Bashō Group, then Fukaku Group, finally Kikaku Group. Born in Ōsaka.

Lived in Edo from 1700, and then Kyōto. Poetic name: Hanjian. A wealthy, flamboyant poet, who is often credited with helping to establish senryū, comic hokku, as an independent form. Regularly released *saitanchō* from 1719, and also produced a number of surimono with his pupils.

AKD: 1, 22, 23***, 61, 63, 71**, 74 [7]

Washida Seiga 鷺田青峨 (?-1730)

Initially Tōko Group, then Sentoku Group. An Edoite. Edited the *Seigakaishū* and produced a 1725 *saitanchō*. It is likely he, and not his disciple Maeda Seiga II (1698-1759, first teacher of Yanagisawa Beīō) who appears on early surimono, as the last dated “Seiga” work is 1730, the year of Seiga I’s death.

AKD: 1, 38, 45, 48**, 64, 70 [6/3]

Takai Ryūshi III 高井立志 (?-1724)

Pupil of Ryūshi I. Opened the notable *renga no haikai* session “Tōfu Hyakuin,” held at Rantai’s residence in late 1716 with the *hokku* (including embedded wordplay on bean curd [*tōfu*]) that gave the sequence its name. He appears with the Sentoku-Kikaku members on two surimono, but the two that he commissioned include entirely other poets. Both of these latter are illustrated.

AKD: 17, 31, 33, 65, 73, 75 [6/3]

Horio Wasui 堀尾和推 (1662-1743)

Chōwa Group. An Edoite. He became Chōwa II in 1733. Commissioned two surimono, in 1722-3, in both of which he appears with Shinwa and Undō in *mitsumono*, plus Hakuun and several Sentoku poets represented with individual *hokku*.

AKD: 32, 33, 35, 42, 46, 67 [6/2]

Kōno Hyakuri 高野百里 (1665-1727)

Ransetsu Group. An Edoite. He typically only appears in a minor position on most Sentoku-Kikaku group surimono, despite being the leading pupil of Ransetsu.

AKD: 1, 6, 29, 39**, 43**; KMB: 1*** [6]

Matsuki Renshi 松木蓮子 (1680-1742)

Originally a student of Sampū, later formed the highly influential *Goshikizumi* Group with **Shiseki**, **Sōzui**, **Somaru** and **Chōsui**. This group, and Renshi's name in particular (as Bōjian Keirin), is mentioned in connection with early surimono in the often quoted account from *Kyojitsu baka monogatari*.

AKD: 15, 34, 45, 48, 70, 73 [6]

Sagyo 叉魚 (Unknown)

AKD: 1, 8, 10, 33, 38, 67 [6]

Ogawa Shūshiki 小川秋色 (1669-1725)

Kikaku Group. An Edoite. She is one of the few known female participants in early surimono. Daughter of a famous sweet shop owner, she married the poet Kan'gyoku, also of the Kikaku Group. After the death of Kikaku, she composed and edited an anthology with **Seiryū** (Gikū), who appears with her on four of the five surimono in which she participates. She commissioned two early surimono in 1710 and 1711, including other female poets such as **Sonome**.

AKD: 1**, 3, 4****, 6***, 11**** [5/2]

Shakuju 尺樹 (Unknown)

AKD: 1**, 4****, 6**, 9**, 11***** [5]

Kakushi 格枝 (Unknown)

AKD: 1***, 4****, 6****, 9**, 11***** [5]

Seiryū 清流 (1663-1733)

First Ichū, later Kikaku Group. Born in Ōsaka, moved to Edo, then later to Kyōto. Had a long and illustrious career as a haikai poet, performing with Bashō in a kasen in 1694, as well as appearing in multiple anthologies, including a *saitan mitsumono* with Ichū in 1683. Went to Edo in 1702, joining Kikaku's group, then to Kyōto in 1718, along with **Tantan**. Wrote the preface to the *Goshikizumi* collection in 1731.

AKD: 1, 4**, 5, 6****, 11 [5]

Ryūei 立氷 (Unknown)

Probably a disciple of Ryūshi. Led two *tentori haikai* sessions at Rantai's residence in 1707.

AKD: 1, 6, 8, 10, 15 [5]

Shimura Murin 志村無倫 (1655-1723)

Affiliation unknown. He was close to Chōwa and **Rantai**, and was one of Rantai's earliest partners in *tentori haikai* at his Edo residence. Commissioned several surimono on which Rantai appears. Also said to have commissioned *saitanchō* on a yearly basis until his death. Edited the work *Kamibasami*.

AKD: 16, 20, 37 [3]

Ōba Shiseki 大場咫尺 (1677-1759)

Initially Ransetsu Group, later formed the Goshikizumi Group with **Sōzui**, **Renshi**, **Somaru** and **Chōsui**. An Edoite; formal name Ōba Ryōwa. Turned against the Sentoku school and its practices of *tentori haikai* in the 1730s with the publications *Goshikizumi* and *Kakimushiro*, aiming for a purer style of *haikai*, more direct and plain than Senshū's *hiyu haikai*. Interestingly, the efforts of the Goshikizumi were supported by Rantai, despite his long allegiance to Senshū.

AKD: 48, 56, 72 [3]

Nakagawa Sōzui 中川宗瑞 (1685-1744)

Initially Sentoku Group (first **Sentoku**, then **Senshū**), later Goshikizumi Group. A wealthy merchant, serving as currency changer for the Edo Bakufu. Poetic names: Fūba, Hakutōen. He turned against the practices of *tentori haikai* in 1731, creating the “Five Colors of Ink” group with Sakuma Chōsui, Matsuki Renshi, Ōba Ryōwa (Shiseki), and Hasegawa Bakō (Sōzui), all of whom appear in early surimono. His break with **Senshū** was finalized in the 1734 *Kaki mushiro*, produced with Ryōwa.

AKD: 48, 56, 72 [3]

Kinfū 琴風 (1667-1726)

First Fuboku, later Kikaku Group. Lived to Edo. He edited several notable haikai collections, and commissioned one surimono in the Rantai collection, for 1720. He also appeared in a *mitsumono* with **Hakuun** and **Hyakuri** in the latter's only commissioned surimono in 1725.

AKD: 29, 39, 43 [3/1]

Sekiuchi Jorei 関口序令 (Dates Unknown, Active c.1700-1711)

First Kikaku, then Sentoku Group. An Edoite. Poetic name: Jo'unken. Worked in a fish shop in Nihonbashi. In 1704, published (through Izutsuya **Shōbei**) the work *Noborizuru* with **Senshū**, based on their travels to Kyōto and sessions with poets there. Appears on three early surimono only, the 1708 and 1711 “First Horse” pieces, and Senkaku's 1711 *saitan* surimono with the Izutsuya signature.

AKD: 1, 5**, 6*** [3]

Uemura Shin'an 上村信安 (1664-1725)

Shintoku Group. Born in Minakuchi in Ōmi, lived in Kyōto. Practiced the tea ceremony, incense appreciation and *kyōka* poetry in addition to *haikai*. He appears with **Rantai** on at least three occasions between 1717 and 1719 as the leading or second poet, during a stay in Edo. AKD: 18**, 24**, 26*** [3]

Hyōka 氷花 (Dates unknown)

Ransetsu Group. See chapter three for details of his life.

AKD: 5, 21; KMB: 1 [3]

Kikuyō 菊陽 (Unknown)

Possibly a female poet.

AKD: 1**, 4****, 6**** [3]

Kyūkō 九阜 (Unknown)

AKD: 1, 6, 67 [3]

Suishiki 水色 (Unknown)

Possibly a female poet.

AKD: 5**, 21**, 23 [3]

Takeji 竹字 (Unknown)

AKD: 5**, 21**, 23 [3]

Izutsuya Shōbei (also Hyōshiya) みつつや庄兵衛 (表紙屋) (1621-1710?)

Teitoku Group. Poetic name: Asuiken. The leading publisher of *haikai* related works in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, including the first edition of Bashō's *Oku no hosomichi*. Established in Teramachi, Kyōto. His signature, or that of his son who took the family name, is on two early surimono, dated 1710 and 1711.

AKD: 2, 5 [2]

Sonome 岩井園女 (sometimes also read **Sonojo**), **Iwai** (1664-1726)

Bashō Group. A female poet, quite celebrated in her time. Met Bashō on his pilgrimage to Ise, later moved to Ōsaka, where she met up with him again, and they engaged in a famous exchange of verse. Later also composed with Saikaku and Raizan in Ōsaka. After the death of her husband in 1705, went to Edo and became a follower of Kikaku. Worked as an eye doctor; became a nun in 1718. She appears on just two early surimono, both commissioned by the other leading woman poet of her day, **Shūshiki**.

AKD: 4, 6 [2]

Onogawa Ryūgin 小野川立吟 (Dates Unknown, Active in the Genroku Period)

Should this be “II”? I moved to Kyōto in GR4

Pupil of Ryūshi I (?-1681, disciple of Nonogusa Ryūho).

AKD: 14, 22 [2]

Sakuma Chōsui 佐久間長水 (dates unknown)

Initially Sentoku Group, later formed the Goshikizumi Group. Poetic name: Ryūko.

AKD: 33, 38 [2]

Kōka 幸貨 (Dates Unknown, active c.1690-1730)

A Kyōto poet, affiliation unknown. Like **Rantai**, he seems to have taken a central place in the haikai world more by his wealth than his poetic abilities, but two 1692 publications show him performing with elite poets of his day, including Saikaku and Shintoku. He may have been a brothel owner. Commissioned two early surimono. A 1726 publication edited by *Teisa*, *Yoyokaiko*, includes a submission from him, along with his Kyōto acquaintances **Senkaku** and **Hyōka**.

AKD: 2, 7 [2]

Hayano Hajin 早野巴人 (1678-1742)

Kikaku/Ransetsu Groups. Lived in Edo, moved to Kyōto, then back to Edo. Poetic names include Yahantei, Shūa. Most famous today as the master of Buson. Hajin was a zen initiate, and although he initially associated with the comic poets **Tantan** and **Senshū**, he never seemed completely comfortable in their world. In 1725, moved to Kyōto, together with Tantan and Gikū, then back to Edo twelve years later, where he became Buson's teacher.

AKD: 6, 34 [2]

Kiyoshichi 清七 (Unknown)

AKD: 9**, 11*** [2]

Kikuban 菊腕 (Unknown)

AKD: 9***, 11***** [2]

Somaru 素丸 (1585-1751)

One of the five founding members of the Goshikizumi Group, along with **Shiseki**, **Renshi**, **Sōzui** and **Chōsui**. . Formal name: Hasegawa Bakō.

AKD: 56 [1]

Hattori Ransetsu 服部嵐雪 (1654-1707)

Bashō Group. One of Bashō's earliest and best pupils. Founder of the Setsumon.

KMB: 1*** [1]

[Additional, non-repeat commissioners: 12, 13,19,25,28,30,34,36,41, 42,44,46,47,48,49,50,52,53,54,55,57-59,61-63,66-75]

APPENDIX II:
Standard Sizes and Terminology for Surimono Prints

All standard surimono sizes derive from the dimensions of a full, single sheet of *hōsho*, or “proclamation paper,” so named for its connection to official functions from the Kamakura Era. This paper, with a thickness like cloth and a pure, white tone, was specially made in the provinces, and, following the sizes of the net boards used to produce it, measures approximately 42 by 57 cm in its large version, 32 by 46 cm in the small. This full sheet could be manipulated in numerous ways in surimono presentation, predominantly as follows below. Note that all sizes given are approximations, and actual dimensions, determined by the original sheet and subsequent trimming, typically somewhat smaller.

Ōbōshozenshiban 大奉書全紙判: A full, completely printed sheet of large *hōsho* paper, as described above. I also call this a *kaishi*, as the full *hōsho* sheet was used for poetry inscription by brush, as well as woodblock print (the *-ban* of *zenshiban*). The *ōbōshozenshiban* was the standard form for early surimono, following *kaishi*, and with the *kobōshozenshiban* was utilized exclusively until the mid-eighteenth century, when smaller formats were introduced. The *ōbōshozenshiban* continued to be the chosen format for formal presentations by poetry groups until the first decade of the nineteenth century, when other formats, especially in series, came to be used for this purpose. *Ōbōshozenshiban* was the longest lasting format, however, continuing to be utilized regularly throughout the nineteenth century, and on into even the 1930s. Two basic variations of the *ōbōshozenshiban* are the *yoko-ori*, with a horizontal fold dividing the sheet into two long panels (each the size of a *nagaban*) following the practices for *renga kaishi*, and full, unfolded sheet, utilized in the manner of a *waka kaishi*.

Kobōshozenshiban 小奉書全紙判: Similar in all respects to the *ōbōshozenshiban* above, but of a smaller size, roughly 32 by 46 cm. These are found in use on some of the earliest surimono, but not much thereafter.

Nagaban 長判(also *yoko-nagaban* 横長判): A “long print,” consisting of an *ōbōsho* sheet cut horizontally into two equal parts, each approximately 21 by 57 cm. Some care must be taken to distinguish an *ōbōshozenshiban* with its panels cut in half from a true *nagaban*, though this is not always possible to do. Typically, however, *nagaban* will have text and images together on one plane, though segregated to the left and right, and in cases where only illustration is found, it is likely that the work was originally an *ōbōshozenshiban* with its textual panel cut away. The earliest surviving surimono, with text only, appears to be in this format, though it too was likely cut for binding, many early *ōbōshozenshiban* being printed on one panel only.

Yoko-chūban 横中判: “Horizontal medium-sized sheet,” measuring 21 x 28.5, made by cutting a *nagaban* in half vertically (thus a quarter of the *ōbōshozenshiban*). This size, resembling the rectangular proportions (though not the size) of the single poem

kaishi, often used in conjunction with *haiga*, was popular in the Kamigata region, and by the mid-nineteenth century became as frequently used there as the *ōbōshozenshiban*.

Kakuban 角判 (also *Shikishiban* 色紙判): “Square” surimono, roughly 21 x 19 cm. The *kakuban* essentially consists of a *nagaban* cut with two vertical slices into three equal parts (one-sixth of a *ōbōshozenshiban*.) As the method of folding *ōbōshozenshiban* often resulted in exactly these proportions (an *ōbōshozenshiban* sheet folded once horizontally, then twice vertically) this was a natural development for surimono. It may also have derived from *jūnigiriban* (half a *kakuban*) in series, placed side by side. Though typically said to have begun c.1808, the *kakuban* actually developed from the late 1790s, and in the second decade of the nineteenth century became the dominant format for *kyōka* surimono with great rapidity and authority, pushing other formats to the periphery. Also used for some *haikai* surimono, in Edo as well as the Kamigata, in the nineteenth century. Frequently produced in series, providing a balance between club and personal representation. More balanced and integrated in its text-image proportions than other forms of surimono, and summoning up another classical model, the *shikishi*, I characterize the *kakuban* as the best fit for the aesthetics of *kyōka* poetry.

Koban 小判: “Small print.” A general term sometimes used in relation to the formats below, but more strictly identifying a miniature print, from as small as a postage stamp to as large as the *yatsugiriban*. As an imprecise description, it will not be employed in relation to particular works in this study, but I will use it as a general term to refer to the various small formats used for picture calendars (*egoyomi*) as an entirety.

Yatsugiriban 八つ切判: “An eight cut,” 21 x 14 cm. This was a *nagaban* cut into quarters. It could be utilized either horizontally or vertically, typically for *egoyomi*, but also for some early *kyōka* surimono and late *haikai* pieces.

Kokonotsugiri 九つ切判: “A ninth cut,” 14 x 19 cm. This format is unusual in that it is not a subdivision of any of the standard cuts of the *ōbōshozenshiban*, but rather a full sheet cut twice across in each direction to make equal parts, resulting in nine panels. Used for *egoyomi*, and early *kyōka* surimono. Only slightly different in size than the *yatsugiri*.

Jūnigiriban 十二切判: “A twelfth cut,” 21 x 9 cm. The most vertically oriented of the surimono formats, resembling a shortened *tanzaku* poetry card, and indeed, borrowing some of its methods for formal text-image integration. Used predominantly at the turn of the nineteenth century, and often in series works, with single, standing figures. This represented the first major change in format from rectangular *egoyomi*, opening the way for the *kakuban* (of which it was precisely one-half). Not often encountered after the first decade of the nineteenth century, the narrow, vertical format limiting possibilities for usage.

Jūrokugiriban 十六切判: “A sixteenth cut,” 10 x 14 cm. A miniature format, often used in early *egoyomi*. Its size limited the inclusion of poetry, so was soon found unsuitable for calendars with *kyōka*, which took larger formats in the 1790s. Still used for pure *egoyomi* into the nineteenth century, however.

Others: Surimono were not limited to standard cuts of *ōbōshozenshiban*, though these are the most frequently encountered sizes. Utilization of a different type of paper than *hōsho*, or a different size of *hōsho*, would result in different dimensions. As surimono was a form open to clever uses and personal interpretations, moreover, many other formats can be found, including fans, giant prints and super-miniatures. The largest print I discuss is Beiō’s “Tori-zukushi,” which is in special *takenaga hōshozenshi* size, 48 by 76 cm. Still larger works were made of two *ōbōshozenshiban* pasted together, resulting in pieces 40 x 114 cm or 57 x 80 cm, depending on how they are combined (Chiba 132,133). “Surimono” smaller than the *jūrokugiriban* have been described, but these do not fit into my definition of the form, being *egoyomi*, not poetry presentations.

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